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ABSTRACT

This special theme issue of the journal "Perceptions" is devoted to the topic of prosocial skills training for emotionally disturbed and behavior disordered children and adolescents. Following an introductory editorial by Howard Muscott, Richard Neel discusses factors that impede the development and inclusion of comprehensive social skills programs in educational curricula and suggests changes in instructional targets and program design. Next, Ellen McGinnis tackles critical issues in social skills training, including efficacy, substance versus packaging in teaching social competence, social skills training for non-special education students, and student-based considerations (nonverbal social cues, generalization, and maintenance). Howard Muscott then reviews evaluative literature on mainstreaming in relationship to the social interaction skills of behavior disordered students. A radio interview with Arnold Goldstein, regarded as the developer of structured learning, is excerpted by Herbert Foster, and Dr. Goldstein describes PREPARE, a prosocial curriculum for aggressive youth, in the following article. Cynthia Warger discusses strategies for promoting social interaction through creative drama activities. In a final article, John Maag gives an overview of relaxation training, including recommendations and guidelines for incorporating relaxation exercises into social skills training programs. (JW)

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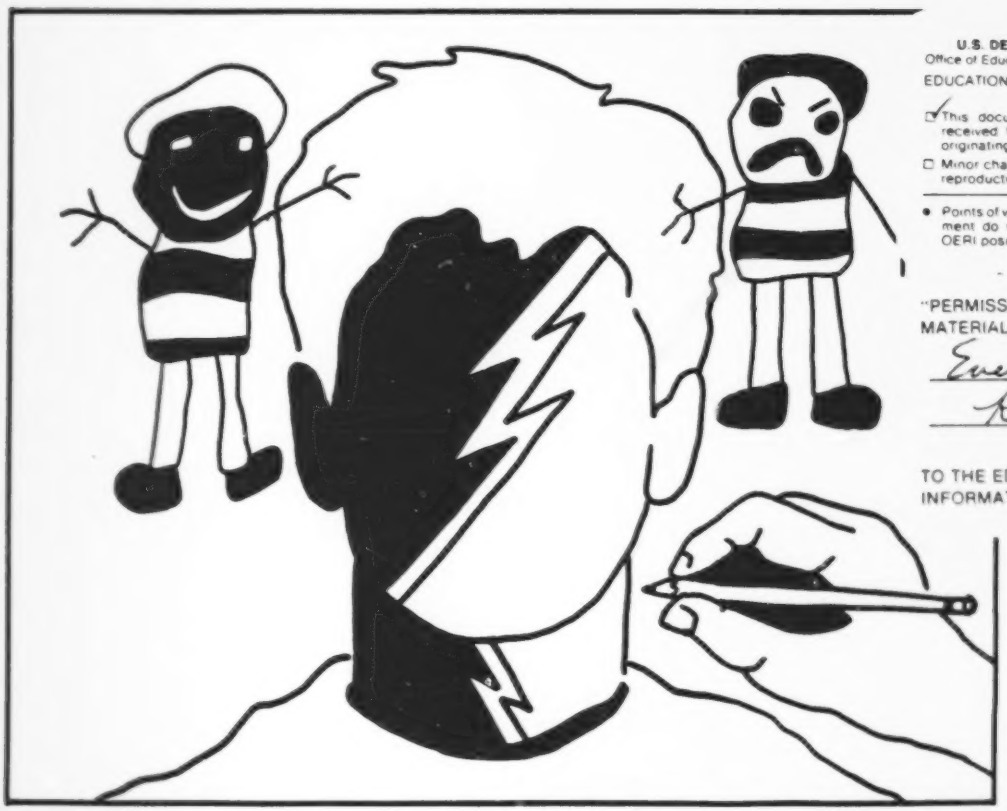

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PROSOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING FOR CHILDREN WITH EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCES (ED) AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS (BD): THE JOURNEY OF 1,000 MILES BEGINS WITH THE FIRST FEW STEPS

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PROSOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING FOR CHILDREN WITH EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCES (ED) AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS (BD): THE JOURNEY OF 1,000 MILES BEGINS WITH THE FIRST FEW STEPS

Guest Editorial by Howard S. Muscott

This special issue of *Perceptions* is devoted to the topic of Prosocial Skills Training. Close your eyes and try to envision prosocial skills. Unlike envisioning reading, writing, and 'rithmetic, the term prosocial skills would be difficult to gain concensus on, as it no doubt conjures up a variety of different images to different people. Theory and effective practice regarding social interactions/prosocial skills/affective education (choose your term) have emerged slowly and painstakingly in education due, in part, to the complex tasks of both qualifying and quantifying "appropriate" human behavior within a social context.

Like the topic itself, the articles in this issue may raise as many questions as they answer. Prosocial skills training is not a panacea or quick-fix remedy to the challenges that children with emotional disturbances (ED) and behavioral disorders (BD) present to their teachers, administrators and families. Prosocial skills training *should* and *must* however, be incorporated into the professional "bag of tricks" of all programs whose mission is to change the lives of disturbed and disturbing youngsters.

As pointed out by the authors in this issue, reactive approaches to behavior change must be replaced by proactive well-designed and implemented programs. It has always disturbed me that even in programs designed *specifically* for students with ED/BD, very little emphasis has, to date, been placed on proactive, prosocial curricula. Try to find a daily classroom schedule that has included in it as a period, 9:00–9:50 – Prosocial Skills. Despite the limitations, the journey of 1,000 miles begins with the first few steps.

The purpose then of this issue, is to wet your appetite to the potential of including prosocial skills training in your work. Much like the Viennese dessert table at a wedding, I invite you to enjoy yourself as you sample the articles ranging from systemic change to curriculum to instructional strategies.

The first section of this issue focuses on systemic change. Neel describes the problems inherent in trying to implement social skills instruction in schools that value and foster conformity and convergence. He challenges schools to revamp the curricula to include programming that acknowledges and promotes diversity and as such, better prepares students for the real world beyond the classroom.

In a refreshing article from a developer of a prosocial skills curriculum, McGinnis reminds us that despite the progress we have made, many critical issues regarding the development and implementation of programs must be taken into consideration by teachers. As is true with any intervention, an informed consumer is a child's greatest advocate. Similarly, Muscott, citing the work of Hill Walker and his colleagues, concludes that the reintegration of students with ED/BD from more-to-less restrictive environments will continue to be thwarted until we systematically teach the social and behavioral skills teachers, at each level of the service delivery system, identify as critical to a successful placement.

The difficulty in developing programs that are prescriptive and effective in not only teaching skills, but ensuring maintenance and transfer of training to real world environments is evident to most of us. Arnold Goldstein has spent the past fifteen years on this step-by-step journey. Foster's "conversation" with Dr. Goldstein provides the reader with a unique opportunity to "hear" the rationale and evolution of the prosocial skills programs that he has developed. The PREPARE Curriculum that follows is an excellent example of a program that Goldstein has meticulously developed to incorporate a wide variety of "courses" designed to deal with the complex task of lasting behavior change.

Finally, the last section includes articles on instructional strategies that should be part of a prosocial skills program. Warger provides the reader with practical suggestions and strategies for setting up a creative drama program that will encourage emotional development and social interaction. Maag argues that relaxation training is a necessary and extremely beneficial component of prosocial skills training. Practical recommendations for implementation are included.

I trust that this issue contains "something for everyone". For those readers specifically interested in research on social interaction, please see the special 1987 issue of *Behavioral Disorders*, Vol. 12, No. 2 entitled, Social Interactions of Behaviorally Disordered Children and Youth. Similarly, those interested in interventions and strategies should refer to the 1984 publication of the National Needs Analysis in Behavior Disorders entitled, Social/Affective Interventions in Behavioral Disorders. Remember, the journey of 1,000 miles begins with the first few steps – so, keep walking.

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Changes Required to Implement

by Richard S. Neel

Introduction

The socialization of youth is integral in the process of public education and has been considered a major thrust of schools since the beginning of the modern compulsory school movement. The idea behind cumpulsory education is to prepare children from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds to successfully integrate into American society. However, Social Darwinism, which is a misinterpretation of biological evolution, has been incorporated into the expectations of social conduct in schools causing the expectations of equal opportunity for those in the melting pot to be translated into programs in which all children are expected to behave like members of the current social structure. Instead of developing a socialization process that embraces diversity, educators focus on conformity and convergence. The result of these programs has been an increasing number of children who do not fit into the system.

Specialized social skills programs have been developed over the past decade in response to the needs of these children who are identified as being socially deficient. These programs have traditionally been treated as an adjunct to the "business at hand"–academics–and are often taught in isolation or when time allows. Children and youth are expected to learn how to behave with little or no formal instruction. They are "taught" what to do by discipline systems and correction techniques. If these techniques fail, the children are labeled as exceptional or branded as troublesome and relegated to alternative educational programming. Children are tracked with little or no hope of being exposed to the types of curricula necessary to prepare them to effectively compete in the modern world. Diversity is viewed as a deviation from the norm, not the norm itself. Convergence is present everywhere–in the social rules, in the curriculum taught, in the way instruction is presented, and even in the manner in which children give feedback on what they have learned. As long as the current structure is maintained, children who are divergent will always be labeled as socially deviant.

Preventative social instruction focuses on cooperation and diverse structures and is far more successful than remedial programs which concentrate on behavioral control and basic academics. Whether the method used is preventative or remedial, social skills instruction should not be an isolated program only for troubled children. Far too often we assume that the current social structure of schools is fixed, and that exceptional instruction should be reserved for those children who are failing within that system. A more realistic approach is to recognize the limitations of the current system and design a comprehensive school structure that more adequately prepares ALL children for the complex social world in which we live. Social skills should be formally taught to all children throughout their school years. A well-articulated curriculum should be developed that prepares children and youth to deal with the increasing diversity that awaits them. Social instruction should take its rightful place–integrated within academic instruction.

The focus of this paper is to discuss the problems of implementing social skills instruction in public schools. First, a definition of social skills is given with a brief discussion of the effects social deficits have on children and youth. Next, the elements of current practice that impede implementation of social skills curricula are explored. Finally, changes that could alter current practices are recommended. Examples of changes within the system as well as changes of the system itself are presented.

Social Skills Defined

The recognition of social competency is not an easy task. Most people feel that they "know" what socially competent people act like, but a clear definition is difficult to find. As Argyle (1980) observed, it is easier to describe the lack of social competency. Generally, social competence refers to successful functioning in one's environment (Goldfried & D'Zurilla, 1969). To be socially successful a person must learn how to meet a majority of their individual social needs in ways that are acceptable to other persons in the environment. It is this combination of individual needs and social acceptability that determines social competence. Social skills, then, are the specific behaviors that are necessary to achieve social competency in a wide variety of situations and settings.

Although there are several views as to what social skills are and how they fit into the prevailing definitions of social competency (Asher & Hymel, 1980; Asher, Singleton, Tinsley & Hymel, 1979; Gresham, 1981, 1986; and Hersen & Bellack, 1976), there is little disagreement as to the effect of the lack of social competency on a child's life. School maladjustment (Gronlund & Anderson, 1962), early dropout (Ullman, 1957), delinquency (Roff, Sells, & Golden, 1972), and negative military service records (Roff, 1961) have been related to poor social skills. Many children with behavior problems feel isolated and rejected (Michelson & Wood, 1980), have an increased tendency to commit suicide (Stengel, 1971) and generally report a lack of friends (Hymel & Asher, 1977). Unsuccessful employment histories (Knold, 1985) and persistent psychological problems in adulthood (Shepherd, 1980; Gotman, Gonso, & Schuler, 1976) have also been consistent problems of these children.

It is clear that children who lack social skills have a real and persistent problem. Without direct and continuous intervention, the problem will not go away. As Robbins' (1966) data suggests, the notion that the problem will go away as the children grow up is just not true.

Current Practice

Although some educators believe that handicapped students, once mainstreamed, will naturally acquire the social skills of their non handicapped peers and adjust their behaviors accordingly (Bricker, 1978; Mercer & Algozzine, 1977; Peterson & Haralick, 1977), most agree that handicapped students seem to interact with non-handicapped peers at a rate far below their non-handicapped peers and need specific social skill instruction (Allen, Benning, & Drummand, 1972; Bruininks, 1978; Gresham, 1982; Karnes, Teska, & Hodgins, 1970; Morgan, 1977). Gresham (1982) argues that mainstreaming without specific preparation in social skills may prove even more restrictive than segregated settings, causing an increase in social isolation.

In a review of social skills programs, Conijn (1987) pointed out the discrepancies between the stated desires of educators regarding the need for social skills instruction and the programs educators actually support. Although many teachers and other professionals assert that social skills is a top priority in their programs, few programs include social skills as a regular part of their curriculum (Okolo & Sitlington, 1986). A majority of social programs that do exist in schools are reactive. Discipline plans and behavior programs are triggered by deviant behaviors. The focus of a majority of interventions is the reduction of behaviors. Little or no attention is given to the replacement of undesired behaviors with socially appropriate alternatives.

Social Skills Instruction in Schools

When replacement behaviors are developed, they are often academic alternatives or behaviors designed to increase compliance (Walker, 1980). Winnet and Winkler's (1972) warning that we are teaching children to be still, be quiet and be docile remains, in the main, unheralded.

There are many reasons for the lack of social skills programs in classrooms. This paper focuses on those factors that continue to impede the development of comprehensive social skills programs and inhibit the inclusion of such programs as a basic part of every child's educational experience. The first major impediment is that educators desire and expect convergence. Children are expected to fit into the existing status quo with little or no disruptions. Social instruction becomes compliance training (Walker, 1980). Discipline programs are developed to increase control and frequently consist of a series of steps toward exclusion. Structured lessons on social skills teach children how to follow directions, do work, and accept criticism (Walker, et al., 1983; Goldstein, Sprafkin, Gershaw & Klein, 1980; McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984; Hazel, Schumaker, Sherman, & Sheldon, 1982).

A second impediment is the school's utilization of academic production as the major measure of excellence. Individual assignments are a major method of instruction. Facts and convergent answers readily measured by standardized tests dominate the curricula. Children are placed in tracking systems that limit their progress from an early age. These practices give many teachers the feeling that there is no room for "non-academic" subjects. More importantly, reliance on one set of knowledge reinforces the notion that society values are restricted to production of academics only. A shift in focus to a more divergent group oriented curriculum is needed.

A third impediment is the view of many educators that social problems are interruptions in the major business of schools. Schools design programs and discipline plans to eliminate deviant behaviors and hold individuals accountable regardless of their abilities or preparation. Far too often educators believe that the system is fixed and that change can only take place within the individual. This attitude of correcting the child as the major source of change has led schools to develop correction programs that focus primarily on the consequences of behaviors rather than providing direct instruction when needed. Imagine a fourth grade student who can hardly add being given a differential calculus problem such as "Differentiate $3x + 4$" and then being sent to the office or expelled if he was unable to comply. Such an approach would seem ludicrous, yet we often take similar approaches in teaching children how to behave. My favorite example of this approach is the practice of suspending students who are truant.

A final impediment is the lack of carefully articulated social skills curricula for all age levels. Most of us learned how to behave informally. Our instructions on how to get along were vague, sporadic and highly weighted towards correction. We use similar techniques in the classroom. Children with behavior problems, however, demonstrate that these techniques have not worked for them. They require different procedures and materials. Since most of us teach the way we were taught, we are often at a loss as to where to begin. There are a few new curricula available. These curricula represent a move in the right direction, but problems with lack of generalization and limitations of scope remain. Until new and more responsive curricula are developed, widespread adoption of social skills instruction will be impossible.

Changes We Can Make

Watzlawick and his colleagues (Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974) discuss two kinds of changes. With apologies to the authors, I will try to paraphrase them for purposes of this paper. (The reader is referred to their book on change for a more complete discussion.) Type 1 changes occur within the system. The rules stay the same. Changes alter the circumstances for the members of the group, but not the group itself. An example of a type 1 change is placement of a child in special education. A child whose behavior is at the extreme on one or more variables is "identified" for special education and removed. The child next in order on the variable of consideration now becomes the extreme. The change has made no real difference in the class. The more the class changes, the more it remains the same. The same is true upon re-entry from the special class. The child, who has been helped in a special class placement, is reintegrated into the typical class. Another child takes his/her place. Again, no real change has taken place.

A type 2 change occurs where the rules of the system or group are changed. Here the methods of operating on the elements of a group are changed. Following our placement example, a type 2 change would occur if we decided to change the way we assist children by eliminating the idea of class placements as a form of service delivery. The notion of identification and placement would have no purpose because we would change the idea of grouping. Such a change is currently being suggested by those who favor the regular education initiative.

Type 1 changes are infinitely easier to implement within existing systems. They can be considered modifications of the status quo. Their effects are one of efficiency. Type 2 changes are complex and require major changes in the system and most often within the people themselves. They cannot be done solely by a teacher. They require community input and support as well. Often the values of the group need to be modified to include the needs of exceptional students.

The following list of changes, if implemented, would increase the social competency of children in our schools. They are divided into types to indicate the amount of commitment that would be required to successfully complete them. The type 1 changes can be made with only minor alterations of existing programs. The suggestions requiring type 2 changes entail moderate alterations of the system as a whole to be effective. The groupings are based upon experience and are therefore open to interpretation.

Type 1 Changes

The easiest change to make is to change the instructional targets you select to teach. Current targets, which include academic facts, behavior reductions, and increases in compliance behaviors, focus on convergent answers and ideas. Possible new targets include academic problem solving and application, an increase in prosocial behaviors, an increase in reasoning and choices, a focus on expressing responses in groups and with peers, and an increase in divergent and ambivalent solutions in both the academic and social areas. Switching to functional activities (Neel, 1984) that have utility in the current environments of children will also increase the effectiveness of instruction.

Another change is in the area of how teachers transfer information to children and what methods of feedback teachers require. Most

Continued on page 7

teachers lecture or direct discussions. Dittos are used far too often to convey ideas. Most groups are time-shares with most of the children waiting while one student responds. The vast majority of practice activities are independent paper and pencil tasks. Several techniques can be applied that will increase the responsibility of each student and provide flexibility in the giving and receiving of information. Cooperative learning programs and peer-directed discussion groups can be added to provide more divergent learning opportunities. Problems and experiments can be substituted for convergent didactic materials. Group activities and buddy systems (e.g. peer tutoring) can be used to expand concepts presented and provide more interesting practice. Finally, alternate methods of finding out what the children have learned can be employed on a regular basis. Video and audio tape, peer interview and reports, teacher group questioning, language masters and computers can be used to sample children's learning. These alternate techniques provide variety and challenge to the students and also free teacher time for more creative activities.

Type 2 Changes

Type 2 changes require changes in the system itself. Typical practice provides for classroom placements based upon a cascade of services. Although labeled as a special class, the curriculum is basically the same with differences primarily in terms of control. Lessons are shortened and materials are sliced and paced slower, but the majority of activities parallel typical classes. Structural changes are artificial and often prevent the child from learning the skills necessary to re-enter a typical class (e.g. short lessons, frequent feedback, programs planned and in folders for each child, one-on-one delivery models, instruction through correction). The continuum of classes focuses on isolation from the mainstream. The model of removing the child and then fixing him or her prevails. Discipline focuses on eliminating undesired behaviors through either reduction programs or by engineering the environment so that the problem never occurs. These techniques tell children what not to do but fail to teach new ways to face the same problem when it reoccurs. In many of these programs it is the teacher who does the majority of the learning. Programs are modified to prevent the occurrence of undesired behaviors. Undesired acts by the children are considered prompts for programmatic changes by the teacher. Classrooms are altered to such an extent that there is no possible connection between the new environment and the one to which the child is scheduled to return. Maintenance and generalization of behaviors are poor because the behaviors learned by the children were how to withhold undesired responses in highly structured situations. When the structure is removed, the prompts for withholding behaviors are removed with it.

Some alternatives that might be considered include providing support programs centered around children's problems. Instead of creating classrooms that replicate the typical classroom, satellite programs could be created within the existing program. These programs would be fundamentally different in terms of curricular content, expected outcomes, structure, and possibly location. If a child cannot currently profit from a typical classroom, then the alternate program should teach those skills necessary for the child to succeed. Improved academic performance in a highly structured environment is not enough. Children need to learn the more complicated social skills required to operate successfully in a typical class. For example, they need to learn how to plan completion of a two week assignment, seek answers from another person, scope out the changes in teacher mood, decipher the informal rules of the teacher, peers and school, and even develop ways to appear occupied and alert even if they aren't. The focus of each satellite would be different. Some could be as simple as a peer tutor or an outside support person. Others might include a group designed to develop trust between adolescents and their teachers. A third alternative might include community based instruction for recreational and vocational skills. Each satellite would be set up by clearly specifying a desired outcome and then determining the staff, curriculum, materials and location(s) necessary to produce that outcome. As the need for the satellite changed, the satellite could be eliminated and other projects developed in its place.

Another change that could be developed would be alternate sites with markedly different rules and procedures. Many of the rules of schools are designed to deal with large numbers of students. Their utility is limited in the adult world. For example, raising your hand and waiting in line are useful when you have three hundred children, but neither skill is used extensively once the child leaves the school setting. Alternative sites could include programs where students have a great deal to say about the curriculum. The rules and structure of the program could be markedly different from the typical class. The tendency is to assume that these programs would be loose and lax, but most successful alternative programs have a carefully thought out structure and hold all students and staff accountable for their actions. The major elements that are different in an alternative program include curriculum that focuses on teaching trust, acceptance and socialization. Students are empowered by giving them opportunities to exercise judgment and experience the consequences of their choices. Structures are usually less formal with a great deal of flexibility. Rules are limited and major consequences are applied only in severe cases. There is a great deal of latitude in judging students, and tolerance for divergent and often undesired behaviors is required.

A third system change involves the introduction of community based instruction. Many sites within the community can be developed to provide successful "classrooms." This notion has been used in vocational training programs in the past, but the behavioral requirements are usually such that children with behavior disorders cannot participate. The community sites recommended here are selected for their social learning components as well as more traditional skill development. Examples include camps, daycare centers, group homes, volunteer programs, political campaigns, etc.

A final consideration deals with the competitive strength of undesired behaviors. There is an increasing body of evidence (Conijn, 1987) that indicates that children often know what to do, but choose to do something else instead. The undesired behavior is just too successful to be replaced by the socially preferred one. As Billingsley and Neel (1985) demonstrated, many desired behaviors are waiting in the wings and will only emerge when the more successful competitor is eliminated. The belief that academic performance and good grades will compete effectively with aggression or clowning around finds little support in the literature. Programs need to focus on increasing prosocial behaviors that can effectively compete rather than eliminating undesired behaviors and problem situations in isolated structured classrooms.

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Summary

The changes suggested in this paper are based upon the firm belief that the current structure of schools does not teach the social skills required of typical and atypical children. Too much emphasis is placed upon conformity and convergence. Children who cannot conform are taught by the community that they have no place. The system reinforces their belief that they are devalued and thereby increases their undesired behaviors. In an effort to adapt to the world as they see it, they choose the most successful behaviors for them at the time. Far too often, these behaviors are socially unacceptable. To be sure, some of the changes need to be made by the individual, but an equal number of changes need to be made by the community. We cannot continue to set the limits narrowly and then cull out those who don't fit and discard them. Yet the evidence seems to be mounting that is just what we do. (Neel, Edgar, Levine & Meadows, 1987). Problems do exist. All the curricula that are needed are not developed. Practical, tested programs are few. In fact, the lack of packaged articulated programs is often used as a reason for not making the desired changes. As long as we continue to ignore the importance of developing programs that produce socially competent adults in all of our children, we will continue to fail to produce the answers that are needed. Social competence does not require that we all be alike. It does not require that we all access the things we need in the same way. It should not be based upon the "look like me" philosophy of so many school programs. To paraphrase Coolidge, the business school is living and learning for everyone. We cannot continue to ignore the important task of teaching all children how to find their niche in the complex social world in which we live. For when we do, the academic learning we value so highly comes to no avail.

Submitted by:
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Neel, R.S. (in press). Changes required to implement social skills instruction in schools. *Students at Risk: Conference Proceedings for the Leadership Institute in Administration of Special Education Programs.* Storm Lake, IA: Buena Vista College.

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The ANYSEED Executive Board is pleased to announce that the revised ANYSEED Constitution presented within the Summer 1987 issue of PERCEPTIONS was unanimously approved by the voting membership 157-0 and adopted by the Executive Board at the regular business meeting October 16, 1987.

CRITICAL ISSUES RELATED TO SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

by Ellen McGinnis

During the last decade special educators have emphasized teaching youngsters alternative, prosocial behaviors. The rationale underlying prosocial skill training is that behaviorally disordered youngsters have difficulty in establishing and maintaining satisfactory interpersonal relationships (Bower & Lambert, 1961). Behaviorally disordered youngsters are deficit in adaptive behaviors which will enable them to interact positively with their peers and adults and to solve day-to-day problems in ways which are likely to lessen the chances of creating continued conflict.

The movement toward prosocial skill training is also affected by the recognition of special educators that merely rewarding the child's positive behaviors, which at times seem to occur infrequently, and consequating his/her undesirable ones, is not enough to create the desired behavior change. Instead, just as a learning disabled child is taught to read in a planned and systematic manner, so must a child who lacks prosocial behaviors be systematically instructed in alternative behavioral skills.

The need for such training for this population of handicapped youngsters has been well documented. For example, research suggests that social incompetence is related to school dropout (Ullman, 1957), juvenile delinquency (Roff, Sells, & Golden, 1972), academic underachievement (McCandless, 1967), high levels of verbal and physical aggression (McCandless, 1967) and psychiatric disturbance (Roff, 1963; West & Farington, 1973; Cowen, Pederson, Barbigian, Izzo, & Trost, 1973).

There are several specific researched techniques to increase prosocial behaviors of handicapped students, including training non-handicapped peers to prompt and reward the handicapped child (Cooke, Apolloni, & Cooke, 1976; Strain, Shores, & Timm, 1977), teacher prompting and positive reinforcement (Strain, Shores, & Kerr, 1976; Timm, Strain, & Eller, 1979) and social problem-solving (Vaughn, Ridley, & Bullock, 1984). In addition, there are currently a number of social skills training programs available for use by teachers which structure the child's learning of positive social behaviors, such as *Getting Along with Others* (Jackson & Jackson, 1983), *ACCEPTS* (Walker, McConnell, Walker, Holmes, Todis, & Golden, 1983), *Social Skills in the Classroom* (Stephens, 1978), *Skillstreaming the Adolescent* (Goldstein, Sprafkin, Gershaw, & Klein, 1980), *Skillstreaming the Elementary School Child* (McGinnis, Goldstein, Sprafkin, & Gershaw, 1984), and *ASSET Program* (Hazel, Schumaker, Sherman & Sheldon-Wildgen, 1981).

The purpose of this paper is not to focus on the necessity for the planned teaching of prosocial skills, for those who work with behaviorally disordered youngsters have recognized such a need. Nor is it the purpose to expound on the techniques or programs which are available to teach prosocial behaviors. Instead, the goal is to encourage educators to accept prosocial skills training with the awareness of several critical issues which exist in relationship to this area of education. These issues, some of which remain unresolved, are related to both the general aspects of social skills training (efficacy, substance versus packaging, role in non-special education, application to severe behavioral disorders (BD), and teaching social skills or teaching values) and to the individual youngsters we serve (consideration of the child's environment, social perceptions, natural performance, and generalization and maintenance). A discussion of these critical issues follow.

General Aspects

Efficacy

Perhaps the most critical issue pertaining to social skills training is whether or not such training results in its ultimate goal. That is, do the youngsters receiving such training have more friends? Are they better able to solve real-life problems? Are they happier and more satisfied with themselves and their lives? The majority of research relative to social skills training has centered on the pre-school age child (Gaylord-Ross & Haring, 1987), with a number of studies focusing on the young child with autism (Lord & Hopkins, 1986; Odom & Strain, 1986; Strain, Shores, & Kerr, 1976). The research reports findings in specific areas of social competence such as socially-directed verbalizations (Shores, Apolloni, & Norman, 1976), positive or negative social initiations and responses (Strain & Timm, 1974), and the effectiveness of behavioral training in selected skills such as smiling and sharing to produce social responses from peers (Cooke & Apolloni, 1976). The body of research presently available provides information on only very specific aspects of the larger construct of social competence.

While great progress has been made in research methodology and practices relative to social skills, it has not yet been established that prosocial skill training achieves the goal of social competence. In addition, the majority of studies currently available focus on the short-term effects of training. For instance, we know that skill acquisition can occur when applying certain short-term interventions. However, generalization and maintenance of previously learned behavioral skills are typically evaluated no longer than six-weeks following the actual training. Therefore, we do not know the consequences of such training beyond this time period, nor do we know the long-term effects of intensive social skills training over a period of years.

Substance Versus Packaging

The format of many social skills instructional programs unintentionally may convey that if a youngster learns all the skills contained in the program the youngster would then be socially competent. Yet experts differ in opinion of what constitutes social competence. Rathjen (1980) for example, views social competence as "the product of an interaction between the person and the situation." (p. 2) Combs and Slaby (1977) have defined social competence as "the ability to interact with others in a given social context in specific ways that are socially acceptable or valued and at the same time personally beneficial, mutually beneficial, or beneficial primarily to others." (p. 162) Rotherman (1980) has identified two components of social competence: the cognitive (or what a child "knows") and the behavioral (the child's specific behaviors). Additionally, Spivak and Shure (1974) define necessary components of social competence as: alternative thinking; consequential thinking; goal-setting; and problem-solving abilities. A variety of factors appear to be related to the larger construct of social competence.

While the specific cluster of variables which delineates a socially competent individual from a socially incompetent one is unclear, areas of research indicate that factors such as the individual's physical characteristics, behavioral repertoires, environmental features and the interactions of the individual in the environment are related to social competence. Milich and Landau (1982), drawing from the research on the topic, have categorized correlates of social status into four groups: a) classroom behavior (on-task behavior, disruptencies, daydreaming, impulsivity, and negative teacher attention); b) cognitive and communicative abilities (learning problems, referential communication tasks, gestural and motoric differences, the ability to accurately perceive emotional and communicational cues, knowledge of social values, and overall cognitive functioning); c) aggressive, inappropriate interpersonal styles (unprovoked and indirect aggression, nasty comments, inappropriate competitiveness, and the dispensation of too few positive and too many negative reinforcers); and d) prosocial behavior (friendliness, outgoingness, adaptability, compliance, cooperativeness, and helpfulness).

The most useful definition of social competence may be one which considers both the target individual and the factors in his/her environment. Actions which may be considered prosocial for an individual

in one setting may not be considered acceptable in another setting or when exhibited by another person. For example, a third grade behaviorally disordered student who learned to begin a conversation with peers in a very casual manner, once attempted this skill with a regular class teacher. The result was a negative response due to the informality of the student's performance. Behavioral flexibility, or the ability to adjust one's behavior considering the specific environment, the individual person, and the specific time of the response must also be included as a component of social competence.

A pragmatic definition of social competence is extremely difficult due to the complexity of social interactions and considering that the specific set of behaviors which constitute social competence have not yet been adequately defined. Therefore, teachers of behaviorally disordered children and youth must be cognizant of the fact that teaching the skills included in a social skills curricula or "package" may not result in a socially competent individual by the currently existing definitions of this construct.

Role in Non-Special Education

What role does (or should) social skills training play in the education of non-special education students? We know that behavior problems are not limited to youngsters with behavioral disorders. Many children with other educational disabilities, as well as those students receiving their education in the mainstream, experience difficulties in interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution in school, home, or community settings. The adolescent years, in particular, are a time of conflict for most young individuals. Instruction in problem-solving strategies, techniques to reduce stress, goal-setting, and conflict resolution are examples of prosocial skill areas needed as part of the curricula for regular-class students as well as for those with behavioral disorders.

With the recent "back-to-basics" movement in education, it may be difficult for educators to justify the time to include a social skills component in the existing curriculum. However, teachers and administrators will most likely find that once such a training component is included in classrooms, less time and energy will be expended on correcting student misbehavior. In addition, teaching students ways to deal with interpersonal conflict can be included in standard curricular areas such as social studies, language arts, and health education.

An additional, critical reason for including the social skills component in the regular classroom is that teaching youngsters prosocial behavioral alternatives prior to the actual time of conflict creates an environment of positive learning and problem-solving versus "after-the-fact" discipline. However, it is the perogative of each school district whether or not to include such a component in mainstream education.

Application to Severe Behavioral Disorders

Social skills training has typically been advocated for and implemented with the more mild end of the behavioral disorders continuum. However, several research studies indicate that a more severe group, those youngsters with autism, have successfully learned social interaction skills via behavioral techniques (Lord & Hopkins, 1986; McHale, 1983). The application of social skills training with severe, clinically-involved behaviorally disordered youngsters, those whose behavior and thought patterns "defy logic", has yet to be determined. Social skills training should not be interpreted as the answer to all behavioral and emotional concerns exhibited by youngsters, and it is the opinion of this writer that other educative and medical techniques may prove to be more beneficial with this small group of individuals.

Public Acceptance

There may be some individuals who believe that prosocial skill training is beyond the domain of education; that public education has already assumed far more than what is reasonably possible. Those who advocate this philosophy may feel that the social skills arena should be left to other facets of the community (ie. home, church). Several years ago there was a similar concern regarding sex education in the schools. While social skills training may not bring about the same intensity of controversy as did the topic of sex education, still educators must be able to justify the importance of training to the public.

Typically, criticism occurs when parents and other community members do not understand what is actually taking place. Therefore, it seems critical to approach the issue of public acceptance in a proactive manner. Inservicing school administrators, regular class teachers, other school personnel, and parents in instructional strategies, procedures, and goals will likely not only increase acceptance of a social skills program, but will facilitate generalization of the target student's newly learned behavioral skill by creating the opportunity for reinforcement in environments other than the behavior disorders classroom. Such inservice training may also aid parents and others in increasing positive interactions with the behaviorally disordered child.

Teaching Social Skills or Teaching Values?

Is social skills training the teaching of middle-class values? There is no definite answer to this question. Certainly social skills training emphasizes such values as constructive problem-solving versus aggression, assertiveness versus passivity. However, the goal of this instruction is to increase the youngster's repertoire of skills and behaviors. The individual youngster, then, has the choice of whether or not to use the newly learned skills.

Many experts who advocate for prosocial skill training emphasize that the needs expressed by the youngsters themselves should be primary goals for instruction; that instruction in skills desired by teachers and parents should be considered only after such student needs are addressed. For example, if a youngster faces daily provocation by peers, it is more useful to teach that youngster alternative ways of dealing with peers versus how to make corrections on an academic assignment. While social skills training exposes students to a variety of new behaviors, actual use of these behaviors, or use of the undesirable behaviors, is a choice made by the students themselves.

A similar philosophy also applies to conventional subjects. For instance, when we teach a child to read, we additionally expose him/her to what we consider to be good literature. Away from teacher or parent direction, it is up to the individual whether or not he/she reads good literature or chooses to read something else. We still owe it to the youngsters to teach them to read despite the ways they choose to use this skill.

The real issue, however, may rest with the specific social skills we choose for instruction. If we choose only certain skills related to classroom performance (i.e., Following Directions, Completing Assignments), for example, but neglect to provide instruction on the assertive skills (i.e., Asking a Question, Negotiation), then criticism of our instruction seems justified.

Student Based Considerations

Consideration of the Child's Environment

Prosocial skills training typically includes instruction in such skill areas as friendship-making, alternatives to aggression, dealing with stress, and classroom survival skills. Within these areas are specific, assertive skills such as Making a Complaint, Negotiation, and Standing Up for Your Rights. Educators need to be aware that certain prosocial skills may not be rewarded in the youngster's home, community, and even school environments. For example, Goldstein's et al (1980) behavioral steps for the skill of Making a Complaint include: (1) decide what your complaint is; (2) decide who to complain to; (3) tell that person your complaint; (4) tell that person what you would like done about the problem; and (5) ask how he/she feels about what you've said. Peers, parents, and educators may not be receptive to a youngster's use of this prosocial skill. How many educators, for example, when confronted with a student who requests that an assignment be reduced if a portion of the work is done correctly, would actually accept such a proposal?

In addition, many of our educational practices appear to emphasize control and following, without question, the established expectations of the school environment. The focus in many schools is on authority versus problem-solving, compliance versus assertiveness. Thus, when social skills training is implemented, prosocial behaviors such as Making a Complaint and Negotiation must be rewarded at times in the school environment in order for the students to see value in use of the skills. If youngsters perceive that the skill performance will go

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unrewarded, and may even be punished by school personnel, certainly they will not see any usefulness in learning prosocial skills. Our current authority roles as teachers must therefore change. We must be willing to participate in problem-solving instead of relying solely on teacher authority. This does not mean, of course, that if philosophy of behavioral skills training is accepted, that everything else we do as teachers should then be casually disregarded. Instead, we must continue to apply the behavioral techniques that we know work in managing a large group of youngsters and in modifying individual student behavior. Neither must we haphazardly abandon our currently existing rules and regulations, for schools (and society) would not function. However, we must also be willing to gradually, and in a planned and systematic way, move toward the goal of student participation in the establishment of these rules and in solving individual and group problems and conflicts. The critical issue remains—are school systems able to lessen their authority-based operations in lieu of teaching and encouraging students to participate in positive change?

While the school environment is one environment to consider, the child's home and community settings may also be contradictory to the skills we hope to teach. Some behaviorally disordered youngsters may live in community and home environments whose cultural backgrounds are very different from those who teach them. Papago Indian children, for example, are taught by their culture to not speak to adults until spoken to. Thus, teaching behavioral skills such as Starting a Conversation poses unusual concerns. Other students who have grown-up in ghetto environments may find that applying prosocial skills such as Standing Up For Your Rights may result in unwanted and/or dangerous peer confrontation. We must be aware of such social and cultural differences prior to instruction in the generalization of prosocial skill use.

A junior-high aged girl once attempted the skill of Negotiation with her mother; the result of this interaction was that the girl was physically abused by the parent. Therefore, it is additionally critical that specific skills be acted out under teacher direction, using the home situation as the hypothetical setting, prior to assigning the actual application of the skill in the home environment. Youngsters should also receive instruction in the assessment of others' receptivity and ability to accept such skill use. Students must be taught that if a response is likely to result in physical confrontation, that a different coping strategy be used. Social skills training is not a panacea; we also must teach other coping strategies to behaviorally disordered youngsters.

While the goal of prosocial skill training is to increase the child's repertoire of behavioral skills, we owe it to youngsters to help them assess situations where the skills might be useful as well as when and with whom the skill performance may likely be beneficial. In addition, educating parents and school staff in the goals and techniques of social skills training will enhance the likelihood that prosocial skill use will be accepted.

Social Perceptions

While specific prosocial interactions, such as joining in an ongoing activity, may be easily taught to youngsters via behavioral techniques (i.e. modeling and roleplaying), the social subtleties do not appear so easily learned. For example, when should a youngster ask to join in? How does a child assess the non-verbal cues another child gives to indicate whether or not he/she is receptive to this social initiation? How does a youngster decide whether or not to continue such initiations with the same child or group of children?

Nonverbal language is often more communicative than is verbal language. How many teachers have worked with a student who has a "bad attitude", for example? How is this attitude conveyed? Much has to do with body posture, physical closeness, facial expressions, and voice tone rather than the specific words expressed. Some youngsters may not remain a comfortable distance from someone during a conversation, thus conveying a threatening appearance. Others may use a condescending voice tone accompanied by hauty body movements. Behaviorally disordered students need to learn not only the specific ways they convey messages nonverbally, but ways to change these negative messages as well.

Some youngsters also appear to have difficulty in accurately perceiving the non-verbal language and overt behavior of others. For example, students who may be described as defensive will likely have difficulty with social perceptions; they seem to perceive that everything that happens is a direct act toward them. Other youngsters may have difficulty distinguishing between friendly teasing and unfriendly teasing. Still others carry out prosocial interactions at inappropriate times. Such social subtleties are very difficult to teach but are viewed as critical aspects of social competence.

Generalization and Maintenance

We know that newly learned behaviors do not maintain over time nor automatically transfer to new situations and environments without employing specific techniques to enhance the transfer (Walker, 1979; Stokes & Baer, 1977). While many teachers of behaviorally disordered youngsters carry out social skills instruction in their classrooms, too few actually pay necessary attention to the issue of transfer of training, and, indeed, this part of social skills training is the most difficult to implement. Specific homework assignments, which plan for a youngster's use of the prosocial skill in real-life situations, are one method of enhancing transfer. Other techniques are included in various social skills training programs (Goldstein, Sprafkin, Gershaw, & Klein, 1980; McGinnis, Goldstein, Sprafkin, & Gershaw, 1984; and Jackson & Jackson, 1983), most of which are based on the work of Stokes and Baer (1977). It is critical that teachers who desire to achieve positive change in the students they serve include such techniques in social skills instruction.

Natural Performance

A colleague once mentioned that when he had visited a behavior disorders classroom the youngsters, one at a time, walked toward him and very formally introduced themselves. This colleague stated his dismay at the rote performance and lack of genuineness of the student's applications of the skill. When a youngster first learns a new behavioral skill, his/her performance may appear strained and artificial, just as a beginning reader performs the reading task laboriously. Continued practice in role play situations should increase the youngster's willingness to attempt the skill more frequently in real-life situations, thereby increasing the naturalness of skill use. Examples of skills which may often appear rote or false, especially in the initial stages of learning, include Giving a Compliment, Introducing Yourself, and Expressing Affection. However, such skills appear particularly difficult for many adults as well. Thus, the interpretation the observer may make regarding the specific purpose behind the application of the skill (i.e., to manipulate or solely to earn a reward or praise) should not be confused with the difficulty a youngster may experience in performing the skill.

However, throughout the youngster's instruction in social skills, genuineness and sincerity should be emphasized. A youngster should not be forced to use a skill in real life, but should be encouraged to do so in a humane and understanding manner.

Conclusion

Social skills training is a *zeitgeist* in special education for the behaviorally disordered. While these techniques hold the promise of assisting to remediate a child's maladaptive behavior, there are many issues related to this topic which must be considered. Some of these issues were presented in this article, along with the author's biases. As we continue our work with this population of handicapped children, other issues will also become apparent. The most critical issue, however, in any approach or technique we use with children is that we as educators, continue to question, not only from the view of efficacy, but from an ethical standpoint as well.

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FACILITATING THE INTEGRATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCES AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS THROUGH PROSOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

by Howard S. Muscott

Historically the role of providing students with functional academic skills has been seen as the primary goal of America's educational system (Cartledge & Milburn, 1978; Goldstein & McGinnis, 1984). Despite almost unanimous agreement that schools are a major socializing institution, formal social skills training has traditionally received little emphasis in the school curriculum (Cartledge & Milburn, 1978; Morse, 1982). However, an increasing interest in social skills training has permeated the field of education during the past 15–20 years. Salient indications of this increasing professional interest can be seen in the rising tide of published texts, curricula and research activities in relation to both non-handicapped and handicapped populations (Hersh & Walker, 1982). At the turn of the decade, Stephens (1981) went as far as to suggest that teaching socially desirable behavior would be the Zeitgeist of the 1980's.

A number of educators (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1984; Gresham, 1981; Walker, et. al., 1982) have postulated that the enactment of the Education For All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94–142) with its provision for education of handicapped children in the least restrictive environment has contributed to the growth of interest in social skills training. Surely, the increase in problematic behavior within the regular school population (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1984) and the empirical evidence that childhood social behavior is predictive of late school achievement (Cartledge & Milburn, 1978) and poor adult mental health (Kagen & Moss, 1962; Trower, Bryant & Argyle, 1978) could serve as justification for teaching social skills to all children. The need for training appropriate social/behavioral repertoires to children with emotional disturbances (ED) and behavioral disorders (BD) is even more critical (Gresham, 1981; Walker, et. al., 1982).

Meeting the regular teacher's minimum behavioral standards for classroom rules and the ability to relate effectively to a new peer group have been seen by Walker, et. al. (1982) as the two major challenges handicapped children must overcome in order to succeed in the mainstream. After reviewing the literature, these researchers concluded that handicapped children in the mainstream have experienced considerable difficulty in making these two critical social/behavioral adjustments. In an earlier study by Hersh and Walker (1981), regular teachers were shown to exhibit high expectations and a narrow set of behavioral standards for the social behavior of all children in their classes. These expectations led to the researchers' conclusion that without proper social skills instruction, "significant numbers of handicapped children will fall *far* short of their teacher's behavioral standards on this dimension, and their development and social adjustment will be concomitantly impaired" (p. 24). These findings are supported by Dwiggins (1981) who found that regular educators do not adjust their behavioral standards downward to accommodate handicapped children. More recently, Muscott (1988) found that among teachers of ED/BD students, resource room teachers had significantly higher standards than their colleagues in special class, special school and residential treatment programs.

Confounding this dimension for children with emotional/behavioral problems is the research that suggests that regular educators are less supportive of integrating these children into their classrooms than any other handicapped children except the severely retarded (Vacc & Kirst, 1977; Williams & Algozzine, 1979).

Handicapped children also appear to be facing formidable obstacles in relation to their ability to interact effectively with non-handicapped peers in the mainstream. Empirical evidence appears to contradict one underlying assumption of P.L. 94–142 that exposure to non-handicapped peers in the mainstream would result in increased interaction through which increased social competence and acceptance of handicapped children would develop (Gresham, 1981; Walker, et. al., 1982). Studies have shown that non-handicapped children interact very little with handicapped children in the mainstream (Bruininks, 1978; Bryan, 1974; Morgan, 1977). After reviewing the available literature on social skills training, Gresham (1981) concluded that "handicapped children do not vicariously acquire social skills via observation of non-handicapped models unless they are instructed, trained, or reinforced for doing so" (p. 139). Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that the child with emotional/behavioral problems is poorly accepted by peers (Cowen, Pederson, Babigian, Izzo & Trost, 1973; Morgan, 1977; Pekarik, Prinz, Liebert, Weintraub & Neale, 1976; Quay, Morse & Culter, 1966].

Based on these findings (and others) Gresham (1981) made a strong appeal for teaching social skills to all handicapped children:

> The fact that handicapped children interact less and are poorly accepted by their non-handicapped peers strongly suggests that these special children are in need of social skills training to increase their rate of positive social interaction, decrease rates of negative social interaction, and/or enhance their social acceptance by non-handicapped peers. Placement of handicapped children into regular classrooms without providing them with the social skills which are critical to peer acceptance may result in increased social isolation and a more restrictive social environment (p. 140).

Despite what appears to be overwhelming professional justification for teaching social skills to handicapped children, there is less than total consensus regarding (1) which social skills should be taught to what groups of handicapped students and, (2) the long term effectiveness and generalizibality of the procedures and training programs which have been developed to increase their appropriate social and behavioral repertoires. Until very recently, research on social skills and handicapped populations has been focused on training specific prosocial behaviors or decreasing inappropriate behaviors in special education settings. While a number of instructional strategies such as behavior modification, modeling, role playing and performance feedback have proved effective with certain populations in the training setting, the fact that maintenance of skills and transfer of training to the mainstream have only begun to be addressed in research designs or failed to occur in most instances when they have been addressed, should lead us to proceed cautiously.

Hersh & Walker (1981) have outlined five tasks that must be accomplished in order for the mainstreaming process to be effective. These steps are: (1) the social/behavioral standards and expectations of regular educators must be systematically analyzed prior to mainstreaming efforts; (2) procedures must be developed to provide for one-to-one correspondence between the social/behavior concerns of receiving regular educators and the social/behavioral repertoires of mainstreamed handicapped children; (3) the handicapped child must be trained in a social/behavior repertoire that is consistent with the social/behavioral demands of the receiving environment; (4) frequent follow-up and monitoring within the mainstreamed setting must occur; and (5) procedures must be implemented to train the regular teacher to manage the child's behavior with only minimal consultant support after an initial adjustment period. It is this authors' firm belief, based on a model designed to reintegrate students with ED/BD from residential treatment centers to public school programs (see Muscott & Bond, 1986), that these steps are critical to the reintegration process from any special education placement to any other less restrictive placement.

In conclusion, one would be hard pressed to find any arguments against the need for social skills training for children with emotional/behavioral problems. By definition, the only homogeneous quality about this heterogeneous group is that they have been certified as handicapped due to behavioral abundances or deficiencies. It is apparent from the literature that much headway is still needed in order to create an environment in the mainstream that will meet the social/behavioral and academic needs of these children, their peers

and the teachers who service them. Future research should focus on: (1) defining the social/behavioral skills necessary at each level of the special education cascade in order for all children to maximize the instructional process; (2) developing appropriate curricula to teach social skills to the various subpopulations of children with emotional/behavioral problems; and (3) organizing long-term empirical research designs to socially validate the effects of social skills programming on these children, their peers and their teachers.

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A CONVERSATION WITH DR. ARNOLD P. GOLDSTEIN CONCERNING PROSOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

by Herbert L. Foster

This discussion with Dr. Arnold Goldstein, Professor, Special Education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York 13244-2281 was excerpted and edited with his permission from an interview with him on my *Inside Education* weekly radio program on WBFO (88.7 FM) Buffalo, New York.

Dr. Arnold Goldstein took his Ph.D. from Pennsylvania State University in 1959 and joined the clinical psychology section of Syracuse University's Psychology Department in 1963. He taught there and directed his Psychotherapy Center until 1980. In 1981, he founded the Center for Research on Aggression which he currently directs. He joined Syracuse University's Division of Special Education in 1985.

Professor Goldstein has a career-long interest as both a researcher and practitioner in many different research areas. Since 1980, his main research in psycho-education has focused on incarcerated juvenile offenders and child-abusing parents. In 1970, he began building, applying, and experimentally testing structured learning and psycho-educational skills training, as an approach used in changing the behavior of the abusive parent.

He is regarded as the developer of structured learning – a psycho-educational program designed to teach pro-social behaviors to chronically anti-social persons. Prof. Goldstein, in addition to being a researcher and practitioner, has authored or co-authored over 30 books and 70 articles.

Dr. Foster: *Arnold Goldstein is probably one of the most sought-after speakers in the United States today. He is much in demand as a speaker concerning his work in pro-social behavior training that started out as skillstreaming and aggression replacement training. Arnold, What got you involved in this area?*

Dr. Goldstein: Well, there are several reasons. First of all, I've been concerned that in mental health and education, we've tended to underserve low-income populations. If you're poor in the United States and other countries, you not only have poor housing, nutrition, and so on, but your services at the hands of the mental health and educational establishment tend sometimes not to be terrific and I focused my career, for the most part, on trying to develop approaches that are oriented towards such populations.

I've been especially interested in the topic of aggression because it's such a major national and international problem, and I'm happy to say that there's more and more evidence in recent years that aggression is, for the most part, learned, not instinct. Anything that's learned can be unlearned. So, most of our work has focused on teaching individuals, whether they are young children, adolescents, or parents who tend to be aggressive, teaching them prosocial alternatives. So much of what we do in education and mental health is designed to stop the person from being aggressive, which is fine, but only the beginning.

If we stop a youngster who's chronically aggressive from being aggressive, we somehow are assuming that he knows what to do, that indeed, he knows how to negotiate, he knows how to walk away, how to share and be empathetic. Typically that's not true. So our focus, even though I run an aggression research center, has not so much been on aggression, per se. It's been on working with people who are aggressive to teach them what to do instead of aggression.

Dr. Foster: *Would you please go into that a little bit more because I remember hearing you speak once about teachers who got annoyed with youngsters who were misbehaving, and it never dawned on anyone that maybe those youngsters were never taught the appropriate way to behave in that particular situation. Would you speak to that more, and give us more detail on what you mean by "prosocial behavior."*

Dr. Goldstein: Prosocial behaviors are things like cooperation, sharing, empathy, and showing affection – qualities like that – the kind of things that somehow we hope or assume people will learn in their lives and very often they don't. In fact, I'd like to say that I'm not in the rehabilitation business, I'm in the habilitation business. I'm not like the rehabilitation person, for example, teaching a stroke victim who used to know how to walk, how to walk. I'm more in the business of teaching youngsters, whether they are adolescents or younger children, to do things that probably they've never done in their lives.

We've developed techniques for doing this. We bring together small groups of youngsters, whether we're working with delinquents who are locked up, or with youngsters in elementary and secondary schools, but these are the youngsters who tend to be – oh all kinds of words – acting out, in school suspension, difficult, disturbing, and aggressive. These are the kinds of youngsters that I have an interest in. We bring them together in small groups and we do certain things.

In this skillstreaming approach, for example, we first show youngsters, we model for them or demonstrate the desirable prosocial constructive behaviors which they may never have seen. We do it by breaking it down into steps, in a concrete way. Then we have each youngster in the group get up and rehearse or role play the steps of that behavior. The group then gives feedback and, via homework assignments and other techniques, we try to encourage them to use out in the real world, in the street, in the playground, and so on, what they've learned in the group.

When I describe what they've learned, it's a curriculum of skills, like the prosocial skills I mentioned, and it goes beyond that. It includes skills such as responding to failure, dealing with teasing, dealing with group pressure, keeping out of fights, apologizing, decision-making, goal-setting, and so on – the behaviors that you and I take for granted as we go through life, but the social skills that many kids don't have.

Dr. Foster: *In your book on adolescent behavior and prosocial training, I believe you have 127 or something like that, prosocial skills that can be taught or learned.*

Dr. Goldstein: There are a lot of skills in there. We've done this work for many years and with many youngsters and it works, but with many it doesn't work. It does work in the sense that they've learned it. That's fine, that's the easy part.

In the training room, it's so repetitive and concrete, when they leave they have the steps of whatever skill is being taught that week. The problem is that out in the streets, very often, these students are rewarded for antisocial behavior, not prosocial behavior. So we've worked very hard and are still working on the target problem of how to increase the transfer of what they learned from the training room to the real world.

To accomplish that, we've added to this skills training, or "skillstreaming," as I call it, two other things, and altogether we call this package *Aggression Replacement Training*. In this package is the skills training, which teaches them what to do.

Dr. Foster: *What is the form of this* Aggression Replacement Training *package?*

Dr. Goldstein: It's classroom instruction. There are three pieces to it, which typically means three one hour classes a week. That's the form it takes. We're doing that in schools around the world, including delinquency centers.

The second piece is something called anger control training. We have taught kids on the street how to negotiate, when someone sort of *gets in his face.* Usually, instead of negotiating, he punches the other kid. How come? Why didn't he reach down into his bag of tricks and do this negotiation that he just did an hour earlier so well in the training room? The answer tends to be that there are difficulties in impulse control. They tend to use more things they've used a lot in the past.

So, he reaches down, and instead of taking the skill he was taught out of his bag of tricks, he takes his fist and he punches the other guy and there is a problem. So, we have to not only teach him the skill to do, we have to teach him what not to do.

So, the second piece of this anger control in which over a course of a little under 10 weeks, we can typically teach a youngster how to identify what his triggers are, what sets him off, how he knows that he's angry and how to use a variety of anger-reducing techniques, like – deep breathing, counting backwards, imagining a peaceful scene. Imagine the long term consequences of aggressive behavior, and also what we call *reminders* which is instructing yourself to calm down, chill out and so on.

Dr. Foster: *You used two expressions so far that I wonder how many people know? One you just used which was* chill out, *and the other was* in the face. *As you know, that's an area of my interest – the language and behavior that have spread from the black street corner.*

At the Bernard Goetz trial, according to the New York Times, *one of the boys involved mentioned that the others got* into Bernard's face *and kind of scared him. I was wondering whether the jury or the lawyers involved really understood that. How about* chill out? *Do you want to explain that one?*

Dr. Goldstein: *Chill out* means to calm down, cool off, relax, or take it easy. We try to teach kids how to say that to themselves.

So here we are. We taught them what to do, we've taught them how to control their anger. There has to be a third piece, and the third piece is moral reasoning training. Very often the youngsters that I work with are very egocentric. They are much more concerned with themselves. Therefore, what we try to do in these moral reasoning training sessions, also known as "Dilemma Discussion Groups," is teach them to be more concerned with the rights and feelings of others, with fairness, and with justice.

We used the Kohlberg's moral education method, in which groups of youngsters debate moral dilemmas and one of the effects of that, that has been found in many people's research, including ours, is that being exposed to levels of moral reasoning, less egocentric than your own, more fair and more just, tends to raise your own level of moral reasoning. We've had some success with this three-part method with youngsters who are locked up and even with elementary school youngsters in local schools.

Dr. Foster: *You mentioned that you are trying to get the youngsters to retain this kind of behavior for a longer period of time. Has there been any research around the retention of these prosocial skills?*

Dr. Goldstein: It's tough research to do. We're involved right now in finishing a three year project with youngsters who are on parole, or after-care. They've gone through our training, and we are tracking now to find out what happens.

Well, the tracking process is an adventure. Kids live their own lives. Records sometimes aren't kept as well as you would like. So far, however, we tend to find, that in terms of recidivism, which means getting rearrested and being returned to a delinquency facility, the kids who are doing best are the kids who, not only go through our training program, but in addition, their parents are going through the same program simultaneously. In other words, here are kids who often got into difficulty, partly because their whole world has taught them and supported antisocial behavior. Father may be locked up in a state penitentiary. Mother may be trying hard, but she's got a bunch of other kids, a job, and trying to keep the family together. Peers will often push the kid into an antisocial direction.

So we say, O.K. we're going to sit with this kid three hours a week and the other hours, the other dozen of hours he's out in the world relearning antisocial behaviors. So, the more of his environment you can capture – in this care we're working not only with the youngster. We have a parents' group and a siblings' group. I'd like to extend it to the school also. Maybe next year we will. The more we extend it to the environment, the more we seem to be successful in reducing new crime.

Dr. Foster: *What you said about the total environment is interesting. In some of the work I have done, I've seen the youngsters associate negative aggression and physicalness with love and feelings. Would you want to comment about that?*

Dr. Goldstein: We're not working too much with that directly. We certainly do have to struggle with this macho business and what we try to do with the kids is give them the example of those sports figures who themselves determine when they're going to be aggressive as opposed to other people provoking you. Who is pulling your strings? Who's in control? That, to some degree, helps orient them and motivate them.

Dr. Foster: *Related to that response. President Johnson's Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, differentiated between positive and negative aggression, and I see very little differentiation in that respect in any public discussion of aggression. Usually, aggression is talked about in a negative way. Certainly as you just pointed out, a football player has to know when to use positive aggression or else he won't earn that Super Bowl ring. Would you want to comment further on that?*

Dr. Goldstein: I tend to think of a continuum that goes on the one end, passivity, on the other end, aggression, and in the middle is assertiveness. I would rather think of it that way because assertiveness is basically standing up for your rights in a way that doesn't hurt other people, where aggression typically involves, in the customary definition, intentional injury to another person. I would say what the football player does, just for defining clarity, I would either call assertiveness or athletic talent or something other than aggressiveness.

Dr. Foster: *That's a good point because I think there has to be more discussion about that in the literature. Another point, one of your colleagues, Dr. Barry Glick, who first told me about your work, told me about some additional research where non-YAVIS[1] juniors were taught skills to help them relate to professionals but the researchers were unable to teach the professionals how to work with the delinquent youngsters. Which leads me to the next point. Have you done any of this kind of prosocial teaching with teachers to teach them appropriate ways of dealing with particular groups of students or clients?*

Dr. Goldstein: Well, that is an excellent question, Herb. We've not done terribly much of that, and we've paid the price, occasionally. We've had situations where we'll go into an agency or a school and teach youngsters things and the youngsters learn them and then they go out into the environment and either they'll see a teacher not doing it and they'll come back and say, "Hey, what the heck did you teach me this for?" Look what's happening. That's why Kohlberg moved into the just community idea saying, "Before I can teach kids and expect them to behave in morally certain ways, the teachers, who are their models, have to do that."

We've had instances where we have taught a kid something, and he goes out and does it to a teacher and instead of being rewarded, the teacher is punishing. We'll teach a kid, for example, how when he's feeling like exploding, to sort of turn his back and walk away. And we've had experiences where a counselor will say, "What the hell are you doing turning your back on me like that when I'm talking to you?"

So you really have to clue into the environment as much as you can and make sure that the kids' models are doing the things that you teach the kids to do because kids do what they see adults do, not what adults say.

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Dr. Foster: *One of the things that you're doing that's really great is that it's different from so much of what is going on. So many of the training programs and books on education are written for very traditional preppy white or black middle-class children. The work you are doing, however, is with delinquents or the non-YAVIS types of clients or students.*

Dr. Goldstein: We'll, it's true. When we started this work it was in the form of a kind of a psychotherapy for adults, and we sent it out to the world. However, there were many, many, other therapies out there, but in terms of the work with delinquency, there's very little. In the United States now, most divisions for youths are oriented towards control. They want kids not to go AWOL, they want kids not to act out.

Dr. Foster: *May I add most high schools, too.*

Dr. Goldstein: And, in fact, that's O.K. to stop people from being antisocial, that is fine, but not to go on and teach them what to do instead is the problem, and that's where our focus has been.

Dr. Foster: *Do you see yourself continuing in this area or branching out in any other areas?*

Dr. Goldstein: Well, we have begun to branch out, to teach additional psychological competencies. Basically, the basic theme of our work is that psychological skills or competencies can be taught. So far, in this interview, I've mentioned interpersonal skills, anger control, and moral reasoning, but there are many other things that can be taught and we've developed a new curriculum – it's not yet released – called the *PREPARE Curriculum* and in it we teach separate courses on cooperation, empathy, stress management, group dynamics, on something I call "Recruiting Supportive Models."

There is evidence that kids can grow up in terrible environments and do well in life. Not many, but some. When you look at why those particular kids do well, one of the things that seems to be true is that somewhere along the way they had a good prosocial model. A brother, a priest, a coach, a parent, someone.

In this course, we teach kids how to identify such models, reach out to them and build relationships with them. Those are the kinds of things I think youngsters can be taught. So we are not only developing and investigating, evaluating this type of curriculum, we go around the country and we try to get schools and delinquency agencies to start adopting them and actually it's been fairly successful. There are a lot of places adopting this kind of orientation now.

Dr. Foster: *Today, in the work world, the same advice is being given to young men and women in business. Find a role model, someone who can help them move ahead.*

Dr. Goldstein: Yes, a mentor. That's really what we're trying to do with kids. There's a fascinating book by Werner and Smith called *Vulnerable But Invincible*, and it's about these kids who grow up in awful places and sail on through. They, somehow managed to find a mentor.

Dr. Foster: *Another aspect of mentoring would be the Boy and Girl Scouts, Camp Fire, community organized clubs, churches, and synagogues. Indeed, studies of immigrants who made it despite street gangs and poverty indicate membership in such groups was the difference between failure and success.*

Dr. Goldstein: It may be difficult to steer, at least many of the kids I work with, to Scouting and things like that. We've tried to capture the same sentiment by forming what I like to call a prosocial gang. We call it the Anger Busters. We have T-shirts. I wish this was video you can see that over there. It's a circle with a slash, the stop sign thing, with a fist in it and it says Anger Busters, and we've done that in many ways, for the same reasons that Scouting and others can be so powerful, in part, and that has to do with group forces, group pressure and so on.

Dr. Foster: *I want to thank Prof. Arnold Goldstein for taking the time from his busy schedule to be interviewed for* Inside Education *on SUNY at Buffalo's WBFO.*

For those who wish to follow this discussion with additional readings, a bibliography follows.

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[1]William Schofield found that if the bulk of the psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers he studied could select an ideal client, the client would be Youthful, Attractive, Verbal, Intelligent, and Successful (YAVIS). See: Schofield, W. (1964). *Psychotherapy: The purchase of friendship.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

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Editor's Note: The PREPARE Curriculum is described in detail in the next article and will be available from Research Press, Champaign, Illinois by the fall of 1988.

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PREPARE:
A Prosocial Curriculum for Aggressive Youth

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Introduction

It has been convincingly demonstrated during the past decade that aggressive behavior is *learned* behavior. Though the belief in instinct, not learning, as the primary source of human aggression dies hard, evidence to the contrary is overwhelming (Bandura, 1973; Goldstein, 1983). Not only is aggression primarily learned, but the manner in which such acquisition occurs has been shown in an extended series of social learning investigations to be no different from how all other behaviors – both antisocial and prosocial – are also learned. Thus, manipulativeness, cheating, teasing, bullying, as well as altruism, cooperation, sharing and empathy – and aggression – appear to be learned largely by means of either observational, vicarious experiences (e.g., seeing others perform the behavior and receiving reward for doing so) or direct experiences (e.g., enacting the behavior oneself and receiving reward for doing so).

Chronically aggressive youngsters are characteristically individuals with a life history in which, from their early years on, aggression was frequently used, and used successfully, by family, peers, media figures, and others constituting the youth's real-world environment. Such aggression by others, increasingly learned and used by the youth himself, is very often richly, reliably, and immediately rewarded. It works; it pays off; it is reinforced – thus making it behavior which is quite difficult to change. The fact that such youths are often markedly deficient in prosocial alternative behaviors, that is, in achieving life satisfactions and effectiveness via prosocial, rather than antisocial routes, makes their chronic aggressiveness all the more difficult to change.

And prosocially deficient they are. A substantial body of literature has directly demonstrated that chronically aggressive youngsters display widespread interpersonal, planning, aggression, management and other prosocial skill deficiencies. Freedman, Rosenthal, Donahoe, Schlundt & McFall (1978) examined the comparative skill competence levels of a group of such adolescents and a matched group (age, IQ, social background) of non-aggressive youth in response to a series of standardized role play situations. The aggressive adolescent sample responded in a consistently less skillful manner. Spence (1981) constituted comparable adolescent offender and non-offender samples, and videotaped their individual interviews with a previously unknown adult. The offender group evidenced significantly less (1) eye contact, (2) appropriate head movements, and, (3) speech, as well as significantly more fiddling and gross body movement. Conger, Miller & Walsmith (1965) add further to this picture of skill deficiency. They conclude from their evidence that juvenile delinquents, as compared to non-delinquent cohorts

> ... had more difficulty in getting along with peers, both in individual one-to-one contacts and in group situations, and were less willing or able to treat others courteously and tactfully, and less able to be fair in dealing with them. In return, they were less well liked and accepted by their peers. [p. 442]

Patterson, Reid, Jones & Conger (1975), also studying chronically aggressive youngsters, observe:

> The socialization process appears to be severely impeded for many aggressive youngsters. Their behavioral adjustments are often immature and they do not seem to have learned the key social skills necessary for initiating and maintaining positive social relationships with others. Peer groups often reject, avoid, and/or punish aggressive children, thereby excluding them from positive learning experiences with others [p. 4]

As Patterson et al (1975) appears to be proposing, the social competence discrepancy between aggressive youngsters and their non-aggressive peers has early childhood roots according to evidence provided by Mussen, Conger, Kagan and Gerwitz (1979). Boys who later became delinquent in their longitudinal study, were appraised by their teachers as less well-adjusted socially than their classmates as early as third grade. They appeared less friendly, responsible or fair in dealing with others, and more impulsive and antagonistic to authority. Poor peer relations – less friendly toward classmates, less well-liked by peers – were further developmental predictors of later delinquency. Thus, it may be safely concluded that prosocial skill deficiencies of diverse – especially interpersonal – types markedly characterized both the early development and adolescent behavior of delinquent and aggressive youngsters, to a degree that significantly differentiates them from their non-delinquent, non-aggressive peers.

Teacher and school administration response to aggressive, disruptive, difficult youngsters in America's secondary and elementary schools, as well as parental response to such behaviors in the home, has characteristically involved heavy reliance on one or another method designed to reduce or inhibit such negative behaviors, with relatively little companion effort explicitly directed toward increasing the frequency of alternative constructive behaviors. We have, in fact, become reasonably competent in at least temporarily decreasing or eliminating fighting, arguing, teasing, yelling, bullying, and similar acting-out, off-task behaviors. But in a relative sense we have attended rather little to procedures designed to teach negotiation skills; constructive responses to failure; management of peer group pressure; means for dealing effectively with teasing, rejection, accusations, anger, and so forth. The technology of interventions for decelerating negative behaviors will not detain us long in the present article. It is a technology well summarized and examined in a number of recent sources (Charles, 1985; Emmer, Everton, Sanford, Clements & Worsham, 1984; Evertson, Emmer, Clements, Sanford & Worsham, 1984; National School Resource Network, 1980; Walker, 1979; Weber, Crawford, Roff & Robinson, 1983). Two of the most heavily relied upon decelerative approaches, and paradoxically two of the least effective in terms of the long-term, are corporal punishment and verbal reprimands. Both certainly have their champions, and neither are lacking in at least some empirical support of their efficacy (Axelrod & Apsche, 1982; Newsom, Favell & Rincover, 1982; Van Houten, Nau, Mackenzie-Keating, Sameoto & Calavecchia, 1982). It is also clear, however, that their effectiveness often is quite temporary, and a complex function of a large number of considerations, including the likelihood, consistency, immediacy, duration and severity of their occurrence, as well as a number of characteristics of the punishing agent.

A central point with regard to the several means in use for reducing aggressive behavior in the classroom, home or community – whether corporal punishment, reprimands, or such more benign punishers as extinction, time out and response cost – is that none teaches alternative constructive responses. They suppress, but offer no substitutes. As we have commented elsewhere:

> A reprimand or a paddling will not teach new behaviors. If an aggressive youngster literally is deficient in the ability to ask rather than take, request rather than command, negotiate rather than strike out, all the ... scolding, scowling, spanking, and the like possible will not teach the youngster the desirable alternative behaviors. Thus, punishment, if used at all, must be combined with teacher efforts which instruct the youngster in those behaviors he knows not at all. (Goldstein & Keller, in press)

Constructive alternatives to aggression can be effectively taught to chronically aggressive youngsters. The present paper outlines our efforts in developing a comprehensive, prosocial curriculum for doing so.

Prosocial Instruction – An Historical Overview

Prosocial instruction in general, and the proposed PREPARE Curriculum in particular, have their roots in both Education and Psychology. The notion of literally seeking to teach prosocial behaviors has

often, if sporadically, been a significant goal of the American educational establishment. The Character Education Movement of the 1920s and more contemporary Moral Education and Values Clarification programs are three prominent examples. Others include Beck's Ultimate Life Goal approach (Beck, 1971), McPhail's Learning to Care Program (McPhail, Ungoed-Thomas & Chapman, 1975), the Public Issues Program (Newman & Oliver, 1970), Wilson's Moral Components approach (Wilson, 1972), Psychological Education (Mosher & Sprinthall, 1971), the Classroom Meeting (Glasser, 1969), and Identity Education (Weinstein & Fantini, 1970).

In a broad context in which the learning process has been Psychology's central concern for decades, its single most direct contribution to prosocial instruction comes from social learning theory, and in particular from the work conducted and stimulated by Albert Bandura. Based upon the same broad array of modeling, behavioral rehearsal, and social reinforcement investigations which helped stimulate and direct the development of our own approach to interpersonal skills training, Bandura (1973) comments:

> The method that has yielded the most impressive results with diverse problems contains three major components. first, alternative modes of response are repeatedly modeled, preferably by several people who demonstrate how the new style of behavior can be used in dealing with a variety of ... situations. Second, learners are provided with necessary guidance and ample opportunities to practice the modeled behavior under favorable conditions until they perform it skillfully and spontaneously. The latter procedures are ideally suited for developing new social skills, but they are unlikely to be adopted unless they produce rewarding consequences. Arrangement of success experiences, particularly for initial efforts at behaving differently, constitute the third component in this powerful composite method ... Given adequate demonstration, guided practice, and success experiences, this method is almost certain to produce favorable results.
> [p. 253]

Both the spirit and substance of this earlier perspective by Bandura (1973) are thoroughly reflected in the teaching procedures and instructional goals of the first PREPARE course presented below. Interpersonal Skills Training. It should also be noted that several other social learning approaches to the enhancement of prosocial interpersonal skills have also emerged in recent years, including Skills Education (Adkins, 1970, 1974), Social Skills Training (Argyle, Trower & Bryand, 1974), AWARE: Activities for Social Development (Elardo & Cooper, 1977), Relationship Enhancement (Guerney, 1977), Teaching Conflict Resolution (Hare, 1976), Developing Human Potential (Hawley & Hawley, 1975), ASSET (Hazel, Schumaker, Sherman and Sheldon-Wildgen, 1981, Interpersonal Communication (Heiman, 1973), and Directive Teaching (Stephens, 1978).

Thus, though both Education and Psychology have begun to seriously seek to meet the challenge of developing means for enhancing positive behaviors. It is in this latter spirit that we began the development of the PREPARE Curriculum, and in that spirit we seek the opportunity for its further development and refinement.

The PREPARE Curriculum

General Considerations

There are a number of qualities of the proposed curriculum which we wish to briefly comment upon, before considering its constituent courses, namely its intended purpose, planned comprehensiveness, relevance, complementarity of courses, prescriptiveness, and open-endedness.

Purpose. It is our hope, and our goal, to develop a means for teaching chronically aggressive adolescents and younger children the prosocial competencies they need to lead effective and satisfying lives with minimal need to resort to antisocial routes to these same desired life goals. We have named the proposed curriculum PREPARE in the literal hope that that is precisely what it will accomplish.

Comprehensiveness. Most interventions provided aggressive, disruptive or even delinquent youth in school, clinic, community or incarceration settings are far, far too piecemeal in their impact. A youngster's daily living experiences for ten or more years may have taught him such lessons as "aggression pays", "might makes right" and "take, don't ask". Surely, we are wearing blinders to hope that a weekly counseling session, or occasional use of time-out, or three days of in-school suspension can make a dent in altering such life-long learning. To have even a chance of success, our interventions must be encompassing, long-term, and powerful. We intend that PREPARE be a step in just such a comprehensive direction.

Relevance. The curriculum's constituent courses, it is our aspiration, will be functionally useful and valuable from the perspective of the youth to whom they will be taught, as well as to the major figures in their real-life environments. To maximize this quality of relevance, the prosocial competency areas we plan to develop into courses were selected based upon not only the relevant professional literature, but also in active and continuing consultation with both teachers and other youth-care professionals and, especially, with adolescent and younger child "consultants" themselves.

Complementarity. The several competencies which the proposed curriculum seeks to teach are optimally used in the real-world functioning of its recipients in sets, subsets, patterns or combinations. We intend to design its constituent courses with this patterning goal in mind, and will later point to specific examples of groupings and sequencing of courses in such a manner that their respective gains have the potential for building upon one another.

Prescriptiveness. We believe strongly that offerings such as the proposed curriculum will yield maximal effectiveness when employed in a tailored, differential, prescriptive manner. Different courses, course combinations, and course sequencing for different youths are components of effective implementation. While such a goal is clearly as much a matter of assessment of deficit as the course offerings per se, preparation for prescriptive usage begins with attention to course development parameters. Thus, the courses to be developed must vary not only in content or focus, but also on such dimensions as difficulty, abstractness/concreteness, immediacy of usage, media employed, and other prescriptiveness-permitting parameters.

Open-Endedness. To plan and develop the proposed curriculum we have and will draw upon the relevant bodies of professional literature; our own decades of curriculum building and evaluation experience, and that of a panel of real-world teachers and youth-care consultants; feedback from adolescent and younger child trainees themselves; as well as systematic evaluation research. While we are *temporarily* pleased with the comprehensiveness of the curriculum, we are well aware of the manner in which new research findings, emerging societal needs, and developments in the pedagogy of curriculum delivery each may make desirable the addition to this curriculum of yet other courses, and the deletion from it of existing courses. Our intention, therefore, is decidedly open-ended, with a willingness and even eagerness to be responsive to such change considerations as our efforts progress.

Course Offerings

The courses described below (see figure 1) are of three types: (A) courses in place – those fully developed and evaluated already (courses 1,2,3); (B) courses in development – those partially developed and currently undergoing evaluation (courses 4,5); and (C) courses in initial planning – those still very early in their formation (courses 6,7,8,9,10).

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Figure 1: PREPARE: A Prosocial Curriculum for Aggressive Youth

Course 1.	Interpersonal Skills Training
Course 2.	Anger Control Training
Course 3.	Moral Reasoning Training
Course 4.	Problem Solving Training
Course 5.	Empathy Training
Course 6.	Social Perception Training
Course 7.	Anxiety Management
Course 8.	Cooperation Training
Course 9.	Building a Prosocial Support Group
Course 10.	Understanding and Using Group Processes

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Course 1. Interpersonal Skills Training

Via a sequence of didactic procedures we termed Structured Learning, we have since 1970 sought to teach an array of interpersonal, prosocial competencies to aggressive youth and children (Goldstein, 1973, 1981; Goldstein, Carr, Davidson & Wehr, 1981; Goldstein, Sprafkin, Gershaw & Klein, 1980). In this approach, small groups of chronically aggressive youngsters with shared prosocial skill deficiencies are (1) shown several examples of expert use of the behaviors constituting the skills in which they are weak or lacking (e.g., *modeling*); (2) given several guided opportunities to practice and rehearse these competent interpersonal behaviors (e.g., *role playing*); (3) provided with praise, re-instruction, and related feedback on how well their role playing of the skill matched the expert model's portrayal of it (e.g., *performance feedback*); and (4) encouraged to engage in a series of activities designed to increase the chances that skills learned in the training setting will endure and be available for use when needed in the school, home, community, institution or other real-world setting (e.g., *transfer training*).

By means of this set of didactic procedures, we have been able to teach such youngsters a 50 skill curriculum, organized into six groupings:

A. *Beginning Social Skills*, e.g., "Starting a Conversation", "Introducing Yourself", "Giving a Compliment".

B. *Advanced Social Skills*, e.g., "Giving Instructions", "Apologizing", "Convincing Others".

C. *Skills for Dealing with Feelings*, e.g., "Dealing with Someone Else's Anger", "Expressing Affection", "Dealing with Fear".

D. *Skill Alternatives to Aggression*, e.g., "Responding to Teasing", "Keeping Out of Fights", "Helping Others".

E. *Skills for Dealing with Stress*, e.g., "Dealing with Being Left Out", "Responding to Failure", "Dealing with an Accusation".

F. *Planning Skills*, e.g., "Setting a Goal", "Arranging Problems by Importance", "Deciding What Caused a Problem".

We have conducted approximately 30 investigations evaluating the effectiveness of this interpersonal skills training approach. Skill acquisition (Do they learn it?) is a reliable outcome, occurring in well over 90% of the aggressive adolescent and younger child trainees involved (Goldstein, 1981; Goldstein, et al, 1980; McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984). Skill transfer (Do they use the skills in real-world settings?) is a less frequent outcome thus far, occurring in about half of the trainees involved. Of great importance here, however, is the manner in which we have been able to show that transfer can be and is increased to the degree that one's training effort incorporates a series of recently developed transfer-enhancing techniques (Goldstein & Kanfer, 1979; Goldstein & Keller, In press; Karoly & Steffan, 1980). Clearly, Interpersonal Skills Training is an established and valuable part of a prosocial instructional curriculum.

Course 2. Anger Control Training

Anger Control Training was developed by Feindler and her research group at Adelphi University (Feindler, Marriott & Iwata, 1984), and substantially modified by us in separate programs involving disruptive elementary school children (Keller, Goldstein, Wynn & Glick, in progress) and incarcerated juvenile delinquents (Goldstein, Glick, Reiner, Zimmerman & Coultry, 1986). In contrast to the direct facilitation of prosocial behavior in Interpersonal Skills Training, Anger Control Training facilitates indirectly, by teaching means for inhibiting anger and loss of self-control. Participating youngsters are taught, over a one-term span, how to respond to provocations to anger by: (1) identifying their external and internal triggers; (2) identifying one's own physiological/kinesthetic cues which signify anger; (3) using reminders, which are self-statements designed to function opposite to triggers; [i.e., to lower one's anger-arousal level]; (4) using reducers, to further lower anger via deep breathing, counting backwards, imagining a peaceful scene, or contemplating the long-term consequences of one's anger-associated behavior; and (5) self-evaluation, in which one judges how adequately anger control worked, and rewards oneself when it worked well. Our implementation of Anger Control Training was systematically evaluated for effectiveness as part of a three-course set, to be discussed below.

Course 3. Moral Reasoning Training

Armed with both the ability to respond to the real-world prosocially, and the skills necessary to stifle or at least diminish impulsive anger and aggression, will the chronically acting-out youngster in fact choose to do so. To enhance the likelihood that such will in fact be his frequent choice, one must enter, we believe, into the realm of moral values. In a long and pioneering series of investigations, Kohlberg (1969, 1973) has demonstrated that exposing youngsters to a series of moral dilemmas, in a discussion-group context which includes youngsters reasoning at differing levels of moral thinking, arouses an experience of cognitive conflict whose resolution will frequently advance a youngster's moral reasoning to that of the higher level peers in the group. While such moral reasoning stage advancement is a reliable finding, as with other single interventions, efforts to utilize it by itself as a means of enhancing actual overt moral behavior have yielded only mixed success (Arbuthnot & Gordon, 1983; Zimmerman, 1983)—perhaps, we would speculate, because such youngsters did not have in their behavior repertoires either the actual skill behaviors for acting prosocially or for successfully inhibiting the antisocial. Consistent with our curriculum development goal of course complementarity, we thus reasoned and have in fact been able to show that Kohlbergian Moral Education has marked potential for providing constructive directionality toward prosocialness and away from anti-socialness in youngsters armed with the fruits of both Interpersonal Skills Training and Anger Control Training (Goldstein, et al, 1986).

Course 4. Problem Solving Training

Aggressive adolescents and younger children are frequently deficient not only in knowledge of and ability to use such prosocial competencies as the array of interpersonal skills and anger control techniques taught in Courses 1 and 2, but they may also be deficient in other ways crucial to the use of prosocial behavior. They may, as Ladd & Mize (1983) point out, be deficient in such problem solving competencies as "(a) knowledge of appropriate *goals* for social interaction, (b) knowledge of appropriate *strategies* for reaching a social goal, and (c) knowledge of the *contexts* in which specific strategies may be appropriately applied". (p. 130)

An analogous conclusion flows from the research program on interpersonal problem solving conducted by Spivack, Platt & Shure (1976). At early and middle childhood, as well as in adolescence, chronically aggressive youngsters were less able than more typical youngsters to function effectively in most problem solving sub-skills, such as identification of alternatives, consideration of consequences, determining causality, means-ends thinking, and perspective taking.

Several programs have been developed already in an effort to remediate such problem solving deficiencies with the types of youngsters of concern here (DeLange, Lanham & Barton, 1981; Giebink, Stover & Fahl, 1968; Sarason & Sarason, 1981). Such programs represent a fine beginning, but problem solving deficiency in such youth is substantial (Chandler, 1973; Selman, 1980; Spivack, et al, 1976), and substantial deficiencies require substantial, longer-term, more comprehensive interventions. The course under development here seeks to provide just such an effort. In our early pilot development of it, it is a longer-term (than existing programs) sequence of such graduated problem solving skills as reflection, problem identification, information gathering, perspective taking, identification of alternatives, consideration of consequences, and decision-making. Our initial evaluation of this sequence with an aggressive adolescent population has yielded significant gains in problem solving skills thus defined, substantially encouraging further development of this course (Grant, 1986). These results give beginning substance to our assertion made earlier that

> Individuals can be provided systematic training in problem solving skills both for purposes of building general competence in meeting life's challenges, and as a specific means of supplying one more reliable, prosocial alternative to aggression. (Goldstein, 1981)

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Course 5. Empathy Training

We are especially interested in the inclusion in the PREPARE Curriculum of a course designed to enhance the participating youth's level of empathy for two reasons. Expression of empathic understanding, it seems, can simultaneously serve as an inhibitor of negative interactions and a facilitator of positive ones. Evidence clearly demonstrates that

> . . . responding to another individual in an empathic manner and assuming temporarily their perspective decreases or inhibits one's potential for acting aggressively toward the other (Feshbach, 1982; Feshbach & Feshbach, 1969). Stated otherwise, empathy and aggression are incompatible interpersonal responses, hence learning to be more skilled in the former serves as an aid to diminishing the latter. (Goldstein, et al, 1986, p. 309)

The notion of empathy as a facilitator of positive interpersonal relations stands on an even broader base of research evidence. Our recent review of the literally hundreds of investigations inquiring into the interpersonal consequences of empathic responding reveal such responding to be a consistently potent promoter of interpersonal attraction, dyadic openness, conflict resolution, and individual growth (Goldstein & Michaels, 1985). It is a most potent facilitator indeed.

This same review effort led us to define empathy as a multi-stage process of perception of emotional cues, affective reverberation of the emotions perceived, their cognitive labeling, and communication and, correspondingly, to develop a multi-stage training program by which these four constituent components could be taught. At the time of this writing, we are in the process of developing concrete lesson plans and materials so that this Empathy Training course can be both implemented and evaluated for its empathy-enhancing effectiveness.

Course 6. Social Perception Training

Once armed with the interpersonal skills necessary to respond prosocially to others (Course 1,2,3), the problem-solving strategies underlying skill selection and usage (Course 4), and a fuller, empathic sense of the other person's perspective (Course 5), the chronically aggressive youngster may still fail to behave prosocially because he or she "misreads" the context in which the behavior is to occur. A major thrust in psychology of the past 15 years has been this emphasis on *the situation or setting*, as perceived by the individual, and its importance in determining overt behavior. Morrison and Bellack (1981) comment, for example:

> . . . adequate social performance not only requires a repertoire of response skills, but knowledge about when and how these responses should be applied. Application of this knowledge, in turn, depends upon the ability to accurately 'read' the social environment; determine the particular norms and conventions operating at the moment, and to understand the messages being sent . . . and intentions guiding the behavior of the interpersonal partner. (p. 70)

Dil (1972), Emery (1975) and Rothenberg (1970) have each shown that emotionally disturbed youngsters, as well as those "socially maladjusted" in other ways are characteristically deficient in such social perceptiveness. Furnham and Argyle (1981) observe:

> . . . it has been found that people who are socially inadequate are unable to read everyday situations and respond appropriately. They are unable to perform or interpret nonverbal signals, unaware of the rules of social behavior, mystified by ritualized routines and conventions of self-presentation and self-disclosure, and are hence like foreigners in their own land. (p. 37)

Argyle, Furnham & Graham (1981) and Backman (1979) have stressed this same social-perceptual deficit in their work with aggressive individuals. Yet, we believe that the ability to accurately "read" social situations can be taught, and we intend to do so with this proposed course. Its planned contents will be responsive to the valuable leads provided in this context by Brown and Fraser (1979) who propose three salient dimensions of accurate social perceptiveness, (1) the *setting* of the interaction and its associated rules and norms. (2) the *purpose* of the interaction and its goals, tasks, and topics, and (3) the *relationship* of the participants, their roles, responsibilities, expectations, and group memberships.

Course 7. Anxiety Management

We have oriented each of the preceding course descriptions toward either directly enhancing prosocial competency (e.g., Interpersonal Skills Training, Moral Reasoning, Social Perceptiveness), or reducing qualities that inhibit previously-learned or newly-acquired prosocial competency (e.g., Anger Control Training). The proposed course we now wish to describe is of this latter type. It has been demonstrated by Arkowitz, Lichtenstein, McGovern & Hines (1975) and Curran (1977) that individuals may possess an array of prosocial skills in their repertoires, but not employ them in particularly challenging or difficult situations because of anxiety. A youth may have learned well the Interpersonal Skills Training skill "Responding to Failure", but his embarrassment at a failing grade in front of his teacher or his missing a foul shot in front of his friends may engender a level of anxiety which inhibits proper use of this skill. A young woman may possess the problem solving competency to plan well for a job interview, but perform poorly in the interview itself as anxiety, as it were, "takes over." Such anxiety–inhibition as a source of prosocially incompetent and unsatisfying behavior may be especially prevalent in the high peer–conscious adolescent years.

A series of self-managed procedures exist by means of which anxiety may be substantially reduced. It is these procedures which form the contents of the proposed Anxiety Management course. Participating youngsters will be taught systematic deep muscular relaxation, (Benson, 1975; Jacobson, 1964), meditation techniques (Assagioli, 1973; Naranjo & Ornstein, 1971), environmental restructuring (Anderson, 1978), exercise (Walker, 1975) and related means for the management, control and reduction of anxiety.

Course 8. Cooperation Training

Chronically aggressive youth have been shown to display a personality trait pattern quite often high in egocentricity and competitiveness, and low in concern for others and cooperativeness (Pepitone, 1985; Slavin, et al, 1985). We propose herein to design and offer a course in Cooperation Training not only because enhanced cooperation among individuals is a valuable social goal, but also because of the several valuable concomitants and consequences of enhanced cooperation. An extended review of research on one major set of approaches to cooperation training, namely "cooperative learning", (see below) reveals outcomes of enhanced self-esteem, group cohesiveness, altruism and cooperation itself, as well as reduced egocentricity. As long ago as 1929, Maller commented:

> The frequent staging of contests, the constant emphasis upon the making and breaking of records, and the glorification of the heroic individual achievement . . . in our present educational system lead toward the acquisition of competitiveness. The child is trained to look at the members of his group as constant competitors and urged to put forth a maximum effort to excel them. The lack of practice in group activities and community projects in which the child works with his fellows for a common goal precludes the formation of habits of cooperativeness . . . (p. 163)

It was many years before the educational establishment responded concretely to this Deweyian-like challenge, but when it did it created a wide series of innovative, cooperation-enhancing methodologies, each of which deserves long and careful application and scrutiny both in general educational contexts as well as, in our instance, with particularly non-cooperative youth. We refer to the cooperative learning methods: Student Teams–Achievement Divisions (Slavin, 1980), Teams–Games–Tournaments (Slavin, 1980), Jigsaw Classrooms I (Aronson, 1978), Jigsaw Classrooms II (Slavin, 1980), Group-Investigation (Sharon & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 1980), and Co-op Co-op (Kagan, 1985). Using shared materials, interdependent tasks, group rewards, and similar features, these methods (applied to any content area – mathematics, social studies, etc.) have consistently yielded the several interpersonal, cooperation-enhancing, group and individual benefits noted above.

In our proposed course, we wish to sort through the existing methods, adding aspects of our own, and seek to prescriptively tailor a cooperative learning course sequence of special value for chronically aggressive youth. In doing so, we will make use not only of the many valuable features of the cooperative learning approaches noted above but, in addition, responding to the physical action orientation typical of such youth, we will also in our course contents planning rely heavily on cooperative sports and games. Such athletic activity, while not yet popular in the United States, does exist elsewhere in both action and written document (Orlick, 1978a, 1978b, 1982; Fluegelman, 1981). Collective score basketball, no hitting football, cross-team rotational hockey, collective fastest time track meets and other

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sports restructured to be, what cooperative gaming creators term "all touch" "all play" "all positions" "all shoot" and cooperative in other playing and scoring ways may seem strange to the typical American youth, weaned on highly competitive, individualistic sports, but it appears to us to be a valuable additional channel to be utilized with aggressive youth toward the goal of cooperation enhancement.

Course 9. Building a Prosocial Support Group

Aggressive youth quite typically are regularly exposed to highly aggressive models in their interpersonal worlds. Parents, siblings, and peers each are quite frequently chronically aggressive individuals themselves. (Knight & West, 1975; Loeber & Dishion, 1983; Osborn & West, 1979; Robins, West & Herjanic, 1975). Simultaneously, there tend to be relatively few, countervailing prosocial models available to be observed and imitated. When they are, however, such prosocial models can apparently make a tremendous difference in the daily lives and development of such youth. In support of this assertion we may turn not only to such community-provided examples of prosocial modelling as Big Brothers, Police Athletic League, Boy Scouts, and the like, and not only to the laboratory research consistently showing that rewarded prosocial behaviors (e.g., sharing, altruism, cooperation) are quite often imitated (Bryan & Test, 1967; Evers & Schwarz, 1973; Canale, 1977), but also to more direct evidence. For example, Werner and Smith (1982), in their impressive longitudinal study of aggressive and non-aggressive youth, *Vulnerable but Invincible*, clearly demonstrated that many youngsters growing up in a community characterized by high crime, high unemployment, high school drop out and high levels of aggressive models, were indeed able to sail on through, as it were, and develop into effective, satisfied, prosocially-oriented individuals if they had had sustained exposure to at least one significant prosocial model – be it parent, relative or peer.

Since such models are often scarce in the real-world environments of the youth PREPARE is intended to serve, efforts must be put forth to help these youth identify, encourage, attract, elicit, and at times perhaps even create sources and attachments to others who not only – as models – function prosocially themselves, but who can also serve as sustained sources of direct support for the youth's own prosocially-oriented efforts.

Our course contents for teaching such identification, encouraging, attraction, elicitation, and creation skills will rely in part on both the teaching procedures and certain of the interpersonal skills which constitute our Structured Learning skills training curricula for adolescents (Goldstein, et al, 1980) and younger children (McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984). In addition, other relevant procedures and materials, yet to be determined, will also be employed.

Course 10. Understanding and Using Group Processes

Adolescent and pre-adolescent acute responsiveness to peer influences is a truism frequently drawn in both lay and professional literature on child development. It is a conclusion resting on a very solid research foundation (Baumrind, 1975; Field, 1981; Guralnick, 1981; Manaster, 1977; Moriarty & Toussieng, 1976; Rosenberg, 1975). As a curriculum designed to enhance prosocial competencies, it is especially important that PREPARE include a segment giving special emphasis to group – especially peer – processes. Its title includes both "understanding" and "using" because both are clearly its goal. Participating youth will be helped to understand such group forces and phenomena as peer pressure, clique formation and dissolution, leaders and leadership, cohesiveness, imitation, reciprocity, in-group vs. out-group relations, developmental phases, competition, within-group communication and its failure, and similar processes.

For such understanding to have real-world value for participating youth (the "using" component of our course title), this course's instructional format will consist almost exclusively of group activities in which, *experientially*, participants can learn means for effectively resisting group pressure when one elects to do so, for seeking and enacting a group leadership role, for helping build and enjoy the fruits of group cohesiveness, and so forth. Examples of specific activities of apparent value for such group-experiential learning include such group simulations, structured experiences and gaming as "Assessment of Leadership Style," "Committee Meeting: Demonstrating Hidden Agendas," "Process Observation: A Guide," "Top Problems: A Consensus-Seeking Task," "Dealing with Shared Leadership," "Conflict Resolution: A Collection of Tasks," "Group on Group," "Line Up and Power Inversion," "Polarization: A Demonstration," "Not Listening: A Dyadic Role Play," "Towers: An Intergroup Competition," and "Peer Perceptions: A Feedback Experience," (Pfeiffer & Jones, 1969; Thayer & Beeler, 1975).

The foregoing prosocial courses developed, in development, and planned for development constitute the proposed PREPARE Curriculum. As a group, they comprise our curriculum development plans for the next two years. But earlier we stressed the continuing value, even necessity, of open-endedness in curriculum planning – for aggressive youth or otherwise. In this spirit, we wish to indicate that, in addition to the full development of the courses described above, our immediate plans also include the initial, feasibility-study examination of a number of other possible courses in such prosocial competency areas as Negotiation Training, Parenting Training, Creativity Training, Dealing with Authority Figures, and others.

Curriculum Delivery

Substanti[illegible] gain[illegible] prosocial competency will occur in youth receiving the pr[illegible]rriculum not only if the *contents* of its constituent courses are [illegible]ely and prescriptively developed, but also if the *delivery* of the courses is conducted in a creative and prescriptive manner. There are a number of special problems associated with teaching chronically aggressive youth, and the PREPARE Curriculum we believe, must attend to them in order to maximize its probability of success. The *Teachers Guide* we will prepare will address four concerns.

1. ***Assessment of Deficit*** – For prescriptive programming of the PREPARE courses to be possible, each youth's proficiency-deficiency status on course-relevant dimensions must be reliably ascertained. Four complimentary approaches to deficit assessment will be addressed: naturalistic observation, role play or simulation testing, interviews with the youth and significant others, and skill competency inventories.

2. ***Classroom Management*** – The rate of aggressive, disruptive, off-task behavior among youth for whom PREPARE is intended is likely to be high. In other contexts, we have devoted a great deal of attention to means for effectively managing such behaviors and getting on with teaching activities (Goldstein, Apter & Harootunian, 1984; Goldstein & Keller, in press). The *Teachers Guide* we will prepare will seek to address this area of concern in depth.

3. ***Enhancing Prosocial Motivation*** – It serves both society and the youth participating in PREPARE rather little if they learn its substance well but rarely use it. *Functioning* prosocial competency means knowing what to do (what, where, when, with whom), and being motivated to do so. Prosocial competency training must address this crucial motivational concern, and we plan to do so along both achievement motivation paths (Alschuller, Tabor & McIntyre, 1980; DeCharms, 1976; McClelland, 1965), via procedures for the enhancement of internal self-regulatory mechanisms (Bar Tal & Raviv, 1982; Kochanska, 1984), and by use of approaches designed to alter one's attributions and increase one's expectancies for successful outcomes.

4. ***Transfer and Maintenance of Learning Gains*** – An effective curriculum not only imparts new knowledge and skills, but does so in such a manner that material learned is retained and available for use by the learner in other than classroom settings (i.e., transfer) and enduringly over time (i.e., maintenance). The development and evaluation of techniques for enhancing both transfer and maintenance has been the primary focus of our own research program for the past 15 years, and a number of effective enhancers have been developed and identified (Goldstein, 1981; Goldstein & Kanfer, 1979). Most recently, we have sought to fine tune this thrust in development research concerned with transfer and maintenance enhancement when working with aggressive individuals (Goldstein & Keller, in press). This focus will be a major emphasis in the planned *Teacher's Guide*.

The four curriculum delivery arenas we have addressed do not exhaust the special concerns which fruitfully will be examined in our planned *Teacher's Guide* for the PREPARE Curriculum. What other concerns additionally ought be included will, we are certain, emerge from the course development efforts which lie ahead.

CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Our research group has conducted a great many evaluation studies bearing directly upon the PREPARE Curriculum. Most are in the Interpersonal Skills Training domain (see Goldstein, 1981 for a comprehensive report of these 30 investigations). Recently, however, we completed a two-year evaluation of a subset of PREPARE courses (Courses 1, 2 and 3) which we labeled, as a group, Aggression Replacement Training. This subset, it should be noted, yielded an extended series of substantial positive changes in prosocial competency in samples of highly aggressive adolescents, (Goldstein, et al, 1986).

We are eager to continue our evaluation program, focussing progressively on all of the PREPARE courses as their initial development is completed and their sustained classroom utilization occurs.

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Getting out a journal is fun, but it's no picnic.

If we print jokes, people say we are silly;

If we don't, they say we are too serious.

If we clip things from other magazines, we are too lazy to write them ourselves;

If we don't, then they say that we are too proud of our own stuff.

If we don't print contributions, we don't appreciate true genius;

If we do print them, the page is filled with junk.

Now, very likely, someone will say that we swiped this from someone else—WE DID!

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING SOCIAL INTERACTION OF STUDENTS WITH DEHAVIORAL DISORDERS THROUGH CREATIVE DRAMA

by Cynthia L. Warger

One of the defining characteristics of behaviorally disordered students is their limited social skills. To expand their social skills, students with behavior disorders need opportunities where they can successfully learn to get along with each other; they need to learn and practice social interaction skills. Unfortunately, their teachers often find it very difficult to provide opportunities for positive social interaction.

Creative drama is one viable program alternative that incorporates the development of social interaction skills with creative expression activities (Behr, Snyder, & Clopton, 1979; Hensel, 1977; Jennings, 1978; Shaw and Stevens, 1979). Too often in the special education curriculum, the dramatic arts are overlooked because teachers fear that the lack of structure inherent in many of the activities will precipitate problematic student behavior. However, in over fifteen years of experience developing and executing drama programs for this population, this author has found that drama techniques *can* be carefully structured to ensure accessibility for students with behavioral disorders. The purpose of this article is to describe how teachers can develop and adapt a drama program that promotes positive social interaction for school-aged students with mild and moderate behavioral disorders (for a discussion of how the activities can be used with severely involved students, see Warger, 1984).

Elements of a Drama Curriculum

Creative drama, the informal branch of children's drama, is defined as those forms of improvised drama played with spontaneous dialogue and action (Duke, 1974). The recreational and educational applications of creative drama have been to provide participants with immediate and dynamic experiences in interacting with others. The objective is generally not to produce theatrical presentations for an audience (Faulkes, 1975).

A creative drama curriculum includes the following basic elements:

- **Sense Awareness.** The goal is for students to explore the environment using their senses. Exploration takes the form of reacting to stimuli, acting on the environment to initiate social response, and developing observation skills.
- **Pantomime.** Pantomiming usually begins with students pretending to use imaginary objects, and progresses to students becoming objects and/or characters interacting with imaginary objects. The goal is for students to develop their nonverbal communication skills.
- **Dialogue.** Dialogue involves verbal expression, the goal being to become proficient in expressing oneself verbally in interactions with others.
- **Characterization.** Although characterization cuts across pantomiming and dialogue, it is isolated here to highlight the goal it represents: to take on the role of another.
- **Improvisation.** Once students have mastered pantomiming, dialogue and characterization, improvisation is introduced. Improvisation offers students an opportunity to solve a problem or make a decision. It requires students to react to certain environmental and/or social challenges, and to experience the consequences of their actions.
- **Story Drama.** The goal here is to have students enact a story. Story drama differs from a theatrical play in that lines are not formally memorized (rather students learn the story and enact it, usually somewhat differently each time) and the goal is not to present the drama to an audience (even though this may occur). Story drama provides students with an opportunity to experience how it feels to be another person in a specific situation.
- **Theatrical Materials.** Some teachers include in the curriculum creating and working with theatrical materials. For example, students may be taught how to create costumes, props, scenery, and masks, as well as learn make-up techniques. Puppets may also be included here. In any case, everything that is created is intended for a functional purpose – that is, it is expected that students will use their creations in a dramatic activity.

The underlying process of creative drama is the spontaneous dramatic play of young children, the guided dramatic play of older children, and the improvisational games, characterizations and dramatizations that arise from interacting with the environment (McIntyre, 1974). With these processes serving as a foundation, creative drama activities can be seen as mirroring the natural developmental stages of childhood play (Warger, 1985). For example, sense awareness activities can be seen as representing the initial stage of play where children explore and respond to a variety of stimuli in a variety of ways. As children develop control over their environment, they begin to imitate it; as their ability to imitate increases, symbolic behavior emerges. Pantomime and dialogue closely parallel this symbolic stage. As children begin to interact during symbolic play, sociodramatic play emerges. Improvisation resembles sociodramatic play. Thus, drama can be viewed as providing a medium for fostering those skills resulting from natural childhood play which may have been arrested or underdeveloped in children with behavioral disorders.

Planning for Drama Activities

Analyze Your Student Needs

If drama activities are being used as a vehicle for student interaction, then prior to selecting activities for a lesson, analyze the needs of the student group. Using the Quay and Peterson (1975) behavior problem classification system for students with behavioral disorders, there are several types of behaviors and/or characteristics that particularly affect drama work. Drama activities will need to be planned accordingly to fit student needs:

- **Conduct Disordered.** If students who have difficulty controlling their acting out behaviors (e.g., physical contact with other students, negative verbal statements towards other students, etc.) represent the majority of students in your group, then select activities that move quickly, allow for a large amount of attention to be focused on each student, take place in a confined area, and which do not focus on themes that tend to "charge up" the students (e.g., race cars). Plan for no more than 15 minute sessions. If only one or two students have these characteristics, then have them sit next to you or your aide.
- **Social Withdrawal.** For students who have difficulty interacting with others, plan activities where individuals can participate within the group, rather than alone in front of the group. For some students, choose nonverbal activities in the initial stages.
- **Immature.** For students who tend to exhibit immature or silly behaviors (e.g., giggling, making inappropriate noises, etc.), select activities that provide a constructive outlet for these behaviors. For example, for students who make funny faces, select an activity that requires this behavior (e.g., have each student pose as a famous clown behind a large picture frame, add sound effects to a story that you read).
- **Socialized Delinquency.** Some older students have a strong need to appear mature in front of their peer group. For these students, select activities that have a reality-based theme and that require verbal rather than non-verbal responses.

Although this above list is not all-inclusive, it should provide a beginning guide when selecting particular activities for a group.

Select the Activities

There are a number of books which contain drama activities that can be used and/or adapted for use with behaviorally disordered students (see for example, Behr, Snyder, & Clopton, 1979; Jennings, 1978; McCaslin, 1987a,b; Spolin, 1963). Prior to final selection, each activity should be task analyzed and all relevant task elements (such as prerequisite cognitive, motor, and affective skill level; input mode of presentation and output mode of task completion; motivation and interest level; social interaction requirements) should be identified. Additionally, the content or level of play behavior represented in the activity – imitative, symbolic, or sociodramatic – must be determined (See Warger, 1985, for examples of this process).

Because it is often difficult to find activities that appeal to the behavior disordered population, teachers might prefer to develop their own. Over the years, this author has found that the following basic strategies offer virtually unlimited opportunities for developing activities for this population:

- **Transformation.** Students become something or someone else by the transforming powers of a "magical" instrument (e.g., wand, potion) or command. For example, using a pretend hypodermic needle out of a child's doctor bag, students can transform each other into jungle animals. Or, after pretending to eat an entire cake, students' stomachs can be transformed into a giant bag of sugar.
- **"Guess What's Inside".** Students are instructed to either show or react to what they pretend to find inside of or behind an object. Actual props (e.g., box, container, burlap sack, etc.) can be used as a focus, or to signal the presence of an imaginary object or condition (e.g., a large ring with keys that fit into an imaginary lock on a door or treasure chest; a stethoscope that amplifies the unusual sounds emanating from one's armpit, knee, or big toe).
- **"Surprise Your Partner".** These activities allow students to give their partners something "unique" to react to. For example, during a session prior to Thanksgiving vacation, students who had been transformed into witches cooked up a special gourmet delicacy for their partners to taste; other students had been transformed into the President and first Lady and were instructed to spill the gravy on their White House guests. Props can also be used as a focus (e.g., using a stadium cushion, students instructed their partners to "sit on it" as if it were a pile of mashed potatoes, a pizza, etc.).
- **Trigger Lines.** Sentences can be used to "trigger" the development of characters and scenes. For example, using the line "What are you doing here?", students can be instructed to say it with different emotion and different voice inflections. Saying this particular line with a terrified whisper can lead to a different scene, than if the line is said in a loud, forceful voice. Students can also say a trigger line to their partners, who must respond with their own line (e.g., a student role-playing a groundskeeper of a movie star's mansion says, "What are you doing?", to which the partner must respond).
- **Vary Elements.** An unusual element can be added to ordinary situations. For example, a hairdresser may discover that the client has a hole in his/her head; every time a container of ice cream is opened, a voice from inside says "please don't eat me"; a student gets stuck on an elevator with a famous person.
- **Scripting.** Students can be instructed to respond (e.g., verbally or nonverbally, with or without movement, etc.) to a story or sequence of directions delivered by the teacher. Both the sequence of events and language used by the teacher should be simple; repetition of actions and words should also be incorporated into the script. For example, students can be instructed to make sound effects at designated points during a story. Or, students can respond with movements to the following script:

  You really want to earn some extra money to buy_____(fill in whatever would appeal to the group). You ask your teacher if he/she will give you a job (optional dialogue here). You plead with your teacher, you beg your teacher ... finally, your teacher says, "Well, I do have a job if you're interested." The job is picking up the garbage in the cafeteria. You pull out the bag and open it. First you find a fish skeleton. Pick it up and put it in your bag ... (You can list a number of objects such as a smelly sock, gelatin, applesauce, toenails, etc.).

How To Conduct Activities

Orientation

Initially, students should become oriented to drama just as they would for any new activity. To establish a context for the drama work, teachers can begin by discussing what drama is with the students, tying in students' favorite actors/actresses, television programs, and movies. It might be helpful to point out that most actors and actresses attend classes where they participate in activities very similar to the ones in which the students will be participating.

At this time, introduce and provide practice with the major rule – "Freeze". Inform the students that "freeze" is a rule that they must follow if they want to participate in drama activities. Next, begin a practice activity where "freeze" is periodically called out:

> (Note: Model this activity with the students) Shake out your hands, faster, faster, "Freeze". Shake them over your shoulders, "Freeze". Now shake them up and down your legs, "Freeze". Now turn your hands into Jello, "Freeze". Now turn them into a spider and crawl up your leg, "Freeze". (This activity can go on, or other body parts such as feet, shoulders, tongues, etc. can be substituted for hands. Also, note that some teachers find that inserting the command "Unfreeze" aids student success.)

Periodically during each session, remind students of the freeze command.

Warm-ups

Next the sequence of activities is presented. Begin with a warm-up activity that incorporates limited group interaction (usually in the form of listening and imitating) with the theme for the day. For example, if an object is to be used for a later activity, use the warm-up time as an opportunity for students to explore it; if a theme such as a circus is to follow, then explore aspects of it such as animals, junk food, personalities, etc.; or if a particular skill is to be emphasized later, focus on variations of it.

During warm-ups, be ready to expand upon students' ideas as a way to increase self-esteem as well as motivation. For example, a student once turned a plastic container into a magician's hat. I expanded his idea with the group by "digressing" from the main activity for a few minutes and had each group member put on an imaginary magician's hat. I said the word abracadabra and pantomimed pulling something out of my hat. "What is it?", I asked. We then guessed what each person pulled from their hats. A shorter variation of this example would have been to have everyone put on an imaginary magician's hat and pull out, say, an egg or a playing card. Note, that I did not suggest the use of the standard magician bunny rabbit or dove, as I have found that too often, some students represented in this population enact violence on imaginary animals. Should the students introduce animals and then inappropriately relate to them, it is important that the teacher state that the behavior is inappropriate, model with another student appropriate behavior toward the animal, then redirect the activity.

Main Activity

During the main activity, the focus should be on problem solving or decision making. Students should be given many opportunities to make choices and then to act on them. Through participating in the activity, students come to see that there can be different reactions to their behavior. For example, the directions to one group of middle school aged students was to be wakened at 2:00 a.m. by lost UFO creatures knocking at the door. The non-UFO characters had to decide if they would go to the door, let them in, help them, etc., while the UFO's had to decide if they were nice or mean and whether or not they could trust the humans. After each presentation, we discussed the reasons why each person acted the way he/she did. It's interesting to note, that many times our students "misread" the intent of other students. By focusing on the character being played rather than on the individual student, a nonthreatening discussion about behavior can occur.

The sharing or showing of one's work to others is very important with regard to building positive self-esteem. Keep the time frame brief for presentations and insist that the group clap after every performance. In fact, in the initial sessions, have students practice clapping and being good audiences (e.g., role-play being an audience of a game show, practice clapping control with an applause meter, etc.). Another technique that can be used to build good audience skills is to

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occasionally add an audience member to the action taking place, either in the form of a surprise character or a prop carrier. However, I find that most students enjoy watching each other and subsequently can be encouraged to demonstrate supportive behaviors.

Closing

Finally, the closing of the drama session or transition back to desk work or another activity must be carefully executed. Although performing generally tends to avert uncontrollable energies, specific procedures are usually necessary, especially in the early stages of drama work. Think of this period as a "cool-down" time. Relaxation activities or dramatic scripting can be integrated at this time. For example, after an activity where students went on an imaginary bus trip, I had them respond to the following script:

> As you look at your watch, you can't believe that it is after midnight. Your legs are getting heavy. Your shoulders are drooping forward. You can barely keep your eyes open. You stop in the bathroom to brush your teeth. You hardly have enough energy to twist off the toothpaste cap and squirt toothpaste onto your brush. Each stroke of your toothbrush makes you more and more tired. You walk back to your room in slow motion, stopping to take deep breaths. Your pillow is on top of your desk. As you slide into your seat, you can't wait to put your head down on your pillow. You slowly lay your head down and immediately you close your eyes. As you fall off to sleep you begin dreaming about the good day you had. You remember the funny conversation between Jeff and Jim, you remember what a good job Kathie did playing the policewoman (note: here I like to summarize highlights of the students' activities and accomplishments during the session, eventually working towards the students' providing their own self-evaluations).

Although some students may still need some individualized assistance to complete the transition, most students will be able to regain enough control to move onto new activities.

Teacher Modifications

There are a number of teacher modifications which can lead to greater accessibility for students with behavior disorders. Each of these modifications have been used either to prevent the occurrence of inappropriate behaviors, or to support the students in correcting their own behaviors. As student self control is a goal, modifications should only be used when necessary.

Limit Time

Short, well-structured sessions of 20–30 minutes are most appropriate with this group of students. In fact, for younger and/or less controlled youngsters, 15 minutes is usually the maximum amount of time appropriate. As students become more in control with the activities, time frames can be extended; however, 45 minutes is usually the maximum. Time devoted to any one activity within a lesson can be modified as well. Often, individual activities must be shortened to prevent disruptive behaviors.

The pace with which activities are changed can aid participation. For example, quickening the pace at which activities are presented helps to focus the attention of students who have difficulty settling down or are overly active. Use activities that require a slower pace of participation only after students have established self-control in the group. For those students who have difficulty responding to changes, more time can be built in for transitions between activities.

Limit Physical Space

Teachers need to be particularly aware of the space considerations represented in each chosen activity and make modifications where necessary. The first consideration involves where to conduct activities. Some teachers find that their students need a separate space (e.g., a corner of the room, another room) designated for drama activities, while others have found that the activities can occur at the students' desks or anywhere else that happens to be convenient. Based on experience, I have found that separate areas tend to help those students who have difficulty transitioning from one activity to another, who are more severely impaired, who are easily distracted, and who hold negative attitudes toward school work.

A circle should be formed for most activities. Students should sit on chairs and not on the floor. When the activity calls for partner work, pairs of chairs can be turned sideways in the circle, they can be turned so that an inner circle faces outwards while an outer circle faces inwards, or they can be formed into two lines facing one another. In each case, the circle defines the space, as does the chair, that students are allowed to move in.

Limit Movement

Most activities will need to be modified to reduce random and unstructured movement. When movement is necessary, there are several strategies that can limit the possibility of inappropriate behavior. The first is to direct students to keep their feet physically planted in a space. Some movement (e.g., walking up stairs, running) can actually be pantomimed in one's seat. Students, one at a time, can also be instructed to move within the circle. "Random switching", where two students are asked to change places (moving inside the circle) as if they were a particular character, is another tactic. Using the command, "Freeze", then having the students resume their movement in slow motion can assist those students who are starting to loose control.

The teacher can also move. During a group warm-up activity the teacher may want to move around the outside of the circle, pausing behind the person whose turn it is. Or the teacher can move inside the circle (e.g., during speaking activities, the teacher can move to the student and ask him/her to speak into an imaginary microphone; when students seem to be having trouble passing an imaginary object to the person sitting next to them, the teacher may need to serve as an intermediary).

Vary Voice

The teacher's voice communicates and sets the mood. Use of whispering or a low, calm voice can help to settle the students down. Similarly, a louder, more enthusiastic tone can help motivate reluctant learners. It is helpful to use a quieter voice towards the end of the session, and a more animated voice toward the beginning.

Limit Interaction

Many of our students have difficulty working together on a task. Thus, it is better to limit one-on-one working partnerships until the students are comfortable working as a group. In the initial sessions, use only the large group wherein individuals perform or have brief exchanges with one other group member. For example, when working with dialogue, have each student in turn say a "trigger" line (e.g., as a policeman/woman, "Do you know why I pulled you over?") to which the person sitting next to him/her responds with a one-liner of his/her own creation. When breaking the students into small groups, it may be necessary at first to assign an adult to each group who serves as a facilitator of good decision making procedures.

Reduce or Change Stimuli

To help students successfully focus on the task at hand, extraneous stimuli should be removed. With highly distractible groups, it is sometimes helpful to work in a corner of the room, with the teacher sitting facing the room and the students facing the teacher. Materials should be kept to a minimum; those items not in use should be stored out of sight (e.g., in a large shopping bag).

Occasionally, an object will elicit unexpected inappropriate behavior. It is a good idea to have another activity and/or object to resort to in cases where it is clear that the students' response to the object is not conducive to learning

Some activities may require students to manage too many variables at one time. The rule of thumb is to keep the activities simple, and moving quickly. For example, rather than having the student demonstrate a senior citizen, caught in a rain storm, who lost his wallet, have the students first demonstrate being caught in a rain storm, then a senior citizen, then a senior citizen caught in a rain storm, etc. The particular movement can be structured as well. For instance, rather than having students "move" like a senior citizen, they could be directed to move only a particular part of their body (e.g., drink a cup of tea, pick up a newspaper).

Finally, the theme or directions of some activities might need to be changed. For example, the activity "Queen Dido is Dead!" (In a group, the leader says, "Queen Dido is dead", to which the group replies, "How did she die?" The leader, or person who is 'it' says,

"she died doing this", and then creates a silly or unusual movement/sound that the group imitates) often evokes movements representing gun shots, knife slashes, etc. with our population. The teacher can either change the theme (e.g., "Queen Dido is happy"), specifically direct the students to perform something unreal, or limit the part of the body that can be used (e.g., only use the face, use no sound, only use elbows).

Choose Time of Day Carefully

Although minor elements of drama activities can be introduced throughout the day (e.g., during reading group, have students read the story aloud with emotion), the scheduling of actual drama sessions should be carefully chosen based on the needs of the particular group. Since drama requires concentration and the conscious control of behaviors, it should be scheduled at a time when students are alert and able to control themselves. If scheduled before lunch or the final bell, teachers may find that students are somewhat more hyperactive and tend to have more difficulty concentrating. Scheduling the sessions before recess or a short break sometimes is a good tactic, as it allows those students who may have become over-stimulated an opportunity to work off some of that energy on the playground. However, most of the teachers with whom I have worked have preferred to schedule the sessions prior to a period of individualized work, insisting that it was important for the students to learn how to monitor their own behaviors.

Use a Variety of Activities

A variety of activities should be incorporated into each session to aid attention and motivation. In fact, objects or dialogue can be changed halfway through an activity (e.g., students are asked to pass around the circle a stack of dishes which the teacher changes into a thorny rose halfway around).

Practice Difficult to Control Behaviors

If an activity calls for certain behaviors with which the students have difficulty, practice controlling the behaviors as part of an activity. For example, many students have difficulty receiving praise. As a warm-up activity, have each student stand and take a bow as the group applauds. It is also helpful to build praise into the activities as well (e.g., in an activity where one student programs another student who is playing a robot to perform a chore, the student rewards the robot with oil "for doing such a good job"). Or, in cases where students have trouble modulating their voices, have them practice control by counting to ten, beginning in a whisper and ending with a shout.

Behaviors such as giggling can also be woven into activities to allow students to practice control. Students can be asked to imitate various types of laughter from an audio tape. Or, they can play a game entitled, "Make Me Laugh". In this game, one partner (without touching) attempts to make his/her partner laugh. Another technique is to have students laugh without making a sound and periodically call "Freeze".

A similar situation arises when students seem fixated on a particular theme or topic. For example, some preadolescents have a tendency to want to talk about sex. In one classroom of middle school youngsters, I planned activities that allowed them to explore themes related to relationships with the opposite sex (e.g., you have a date with the person of your dreams to go to a rock concert, but you wake up to find that your hair looks like this – I produce a wig with hair made of various packing materials). In a clasroom of 5th graders who were fixated on "toilet talk", I devised an activity where one person was stuck in the toilet and the other had to determine why he/she was there and how to get him/her out without flushing or damaging the toilet. In both cases, the topics tended to disappear altogether shortly thereafter.

A word of caution: in cases where the student is fixated on deep-seated emotional topics, it is best to involve the psychologist or social worker to help determine an appropriate response. For example, I once worked with a student who had been repeatedly sexually abused. Many of his responses in activities involved sexual organs. Here was a case where I requested that the school psychologist work with us as a group, and then with the student individually after the drama sessions. It is important to keep in mind that although many theorists believe that the drama activities have therapeutic value to our population, the activities are primarily designed to be educational.

Choose Topics of Interest

Choice of topics is critical to student motivation: the topic can also hinder or facilitate appropriate behaviors. Topics and themes should be age appropriate (e.g., older students should not be asked to be animals) and represent knowledge within the students' repertoire. Additionally, topics which have a tendency to excite the students (e.g., race cars, "Big Time Wrestling", gun fights), should either not be used or should be integrated into structured activities after the students have mastered a high level of self-control. Many teachers have found that using topics and themes from other subjects studied (e.g., social studies, reading, science) often leads to opportunities for creative thinking, and also helps students develop positive attitudes towards those subject areas.

Permit Partial Participation

Never make students participate. In cases where the activity is too difficult, provide the student with an opportunity to partially participate, that is to perform a variation or small part of the total activity. In those cases where a student who generally participates refuses to do so, gentle teasing can sometimes help. For example, should a student be asked in a warm-up to produce a behavior that other students are to copy, then have the students imitate whatever he/she does (e.g., if the student is sitting with arms crossed, pouting, then everyone should imitate that behavior).

Redirect Inappropriate Behavior

Some students will demonstrate inappropriate behavior during drama activities just as they do during activities the rest of the day. Prior to the drama session, students should be spoken to individually and informed of consequences for breaking rules. During the session, ignore those behaviors that you would typically ignore and do not draw group attention to inappropriate behaviors. Such teacher tactics as physical proximity and stares can be used as cues for those behaviors within the student's control. It may be necessary to assign an aide to work directly with a particular student during the activities. The aide should be instructed to remove the student from the group if behavior becomes a problem.

Redirection can be effectively used in most drama situations and is based on the principle of keeping the student actively involved. For example, if a student is becoming noisy, have his/her character suddenly develop a case of laryngitis. I once pulled out a candy box for an activity. The students spontaneously jumped up from their seats and started pulling for the box. I said in a firm voice, "The box has burst open and candy is pouring into your mouth. There's chocolate fudge, candy bars, ... You eat it up until you suddenly realize that you've eaten too much. You're feeling very ill. All you want to do is sit down and hold your bloated stomach." The students, to my relief, all swooned backed to their seats, moaning and groaning.

Model Appropriate Behavior

One of the most powerful tools teachers have to work with is their own participation. Besides serving as an excellent motivator for student participation, the teacher who participates provides critical cues for behavior. Further, through participation, the teacher provides students with affective security – a prerequisite to risk-taking behavior.

Because the teacher provides such a powerful model, it is critical that he/she enjoy the activities and the students. If a teacher is embarrassed to participate, then that affect will be communicated to the students and they will respond accordingly. If a teacher finds a particular student's attempts pathetic, then there is a potential for hurt feelings and scapegoating by the rest of the group. While these cautions should go without saying, I have, unfortunately, witnessed an occasional well-intentioned teacher who, feeling insecure in the role during drama, inadvertently communicated negative affect to the students. Because drama requires students to share their creative abilities and because research has shown that, for this population, creative expression is positively related to self-esteem (Warger & Kleman, 1986), it is crucial that teachers respect the student's efforts and value their own contribution to the process. Liberally reinforce student attempts and successes.

Continued on page 30

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Conclusion

Through participation in drama activities, students develop and/or are provided with an opportunity to practice many important skills: identifying emotions and recognizing the effect they have on behavior; taking the role of others; communicating to others how one feels and what one wants; problem solving and decision making; resolving conflicts; expressing oneself aesthetically. Because drama activities are presented in a noncompetitive, social context, they also provide students with positive experiences relating to their peers and other adults. Moreover, because they can be carefully structured, these very useful drama activities can be made accessible to students with behavior disorders.

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PALLIATIVE COPING AND SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING: GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

by John W. Maag

Development of social skills training procedures have burgeoned during the past decade. Standardized empirically-based curricula and materials are readily available to clinicians and educators (see McConnell, 1987 for example). Despite increased sophistication, a set of procedures often missing from most curricula are what Lazuras and Launier (1978) referred to as palliative coping techniques. Palliative coping includes a number of techniques designed to relieve distress and foster emotion-regulation such as engaging in social comparisons and searching for meaning, diverting attention, expressing affect, and training in relaxation. Relaxation training in particular is most relevant when stressful or adversive situations can be neither altered nor avoided (Meichenbaum, 1985).

It is somewhat surprising that progressive muscle relaxation has often been omitted from social skills training programs since acquisition of social skills are frequently mediated by increased use of relaxation (Vallis, 1984). Use of relaxation is germane for enhancing generalization since individuals' inability to cope with stress often interferes with their production of newley acquired interpersonal skills (Feindler & Ecton, 1986). Inability to cope with stressful situations can cause individuals' reversion to maladaptive behaviors frequently used in the past under similar situations.

This article presents a brief overview of relaxation training with children and adolescents exhibiting problematic behaviors and emotional disturbance. Recommendations and guidelines for incorporating relaxation techniques into social skills training programs are presented. The purpose of this article is to underscore the compatibility of palliative coping techniques and social skills training programs. Including progressive muscle relaxation may increase the efficacy of social skills training programs.

Muscle Relaxation with School-Aged Children

For several years reports have appeared in the literature indicating the efficacy of relaxation training for treating childhood anxiety, phobias, and psychosomatic symptoms (e.g., Knapp & Wells, 1978; Miller, 1972; Walker, 1979). Spurred on by Goldfried and Trier (1974) who recognized that relaxation can be an active coping skill, its application has been expanded to treat a wide variety of behavior problems in handicapped youth.

Over a decade ago, Robin, Schneider, and Dolnick (1976) incorporated muscle relaxation into their Turtle Technique for teaching self-control of aggression to emotionally disturbed children. Walton (1979) used a combination of relaxation and biofeedback training to reduce inappropriate classroom behaviors in five severely emotionally handicapped boys. Reductions in aggression, distractibility, and self-injurious behavior were noted in four of the five children. Relaxation training has also been used effectively with hyperactive children (Omizo, 1980; Rivera & Omizo, 1980) and to decrease disruptions, strengthen on-task behavior, and increase academic performance of autistic adolescents in classroom settings (Marholin II, Steinman, Luiselli, Schwartz, & Townsend, 1979).

Researchers have also found that relaxation training was effective in improving many social and academic behaviors of learning disabled (LD) students (Carter & Russell, 1980; Omizo, Loffredo, & Hammett, 1982). Loffredo, Omizo, and Hammett (1984), for example, found that relaxation training techniques improved LD students' self-concept scores. Amerikaner and Summerlin (1982) found relaxation training was more effective than social skills training for improving LD students' self-concept scores.

Improvements in self-concept scores, however, are not robust predictors of subsequent behavior change. Luiselli, Steinman, Marholin II, and Steinman (1981) collected direct measures of academic and social behaviors and found that relaxation training was no more effective than a card-playing condition. Unfortunately, no reversal phases were employed, nor were any physiological measures documenting levels of relaxation collected. Interestingly, card playing is also a palliative coping technique. Meichenbaum (1985) discussed the relaxing nature of performing absorbing activities.

Only one study to date has collected levels of relaxation through physiological measures. Fejes and Prieto (1987) employed an A-B-A-B design with a hyperkinetic trainable mentally retarded child to assess the effectiveness of progressive relaxation training over a no-training phase for reducing frontalis muscle tension as measured on an electromyometer (EMG). Data were reported as percentage of time below resting threshold. Reduced levels of muscle tension on EMG recordings were evident during relaxation training sessions when compared with baseline sessions.

Recommendations and Guidelines for Social Skills Training

Rather than debating the differential benefits of relaxation training versus other interventions (e.g., social skills training), a more logical and efficacious approach is to incorporate palliative techniques into social skills training programs. Relaxation training techniques, for example, are an integral component of stress inoculation training programs. Stress inoculation training incorporates instrumental techniques such as social skills training or cognitive restructuring along with palliative coping techniques such as muscular relaxation or activity scheduling. Several researchers have used stress inoculation training to decrease aggression and teach coping responses to behaviorally disordered youth (Maag, Parks, & Rutherford, in press; Schlichter & Horan, 1981).

The nexus between palliative and instrumental techniques is that both can be acquired through the use of modeling, rehearsal, verbal mediation, corrective feedback, and reinforcement. Although the order in which coping techniques are taught can vary, it is usually best to begin a social skills training program with relaxation since it is readily learned by handicapped students. It is also possible that acquisition of specific skills is potentiated by increased use of relaxation (Vallis, 1984). This finding is suggestive of relaxation training facilitating learning and performance of prosocial behaviors.

A number of diverse procedures have been used to teach relaxation. However, no one approach appears to be more beneficial that any other (Meichenbaum, 1985). Moreover, specific treatment manuals and student-assisted relaxation audiotapes are available (Cautela & Groden, 1979; Lupin, 1977). Therefore, these procedures will not be reproduced in this article. Rather, the discussion here will focus on four guidelines for incorporating relaxation training into social skills training programs: (a) explaining to students how physical tenseness exacerbates stress; (b) assessing students' previous experiences and current expectations regarding relaxation training; (c) presenting relaxation training as an active coping skill; and (d) discussing specific ways students will use relaxation and providing them with practice.

First, the introduction of relaxation should grow out of the rationale that physical tenseness exacerbates stress and inhibits acquisition and performance of interpersonal coping skills. A student having to deal with an antogonistic peer, for example, can not cope successfully while experiencing anxiety and stress regarding the confrontation. A rationale is provided for the specific relaxation procedure selected using real-life scenarios germane to students' situations. Reference is made to a stress-tension cycle – how occupying one's attention short-circuits stress, how relaxation can reduce anxiety because it represents something students can do to exert control, and how relaxation and tension are incompatible states (Turk, Meichenbaum, &

Genest, 1983, provided a detailed presentation of the relaxation rationale). Relaxation training procedures are then rehearsed and role-played just as other social skills training techniques.

Second, it is important to tap any previous experiences and current expectations students hold concerning relaxation. In some instances, students may view relaxation as a mear "mind game" adults are playing. Students may also have concerns about using relaxation because of the belief that their peers will make fun of them. Such concerns can be dealt with accordingly. In the first instance, an electromyometer apparatus or other biofeedback instrumentation can be used to validate the relaxation exercises. Teachers must be sensitive to not only the mechanics of the training procedure but also the student's internal dialogue about its use. In the instance where a student is apprehensive about peers making fun of him or her, the teacher can indicate that everyone practices some form of relaxation, whether listening to music or daydreaming. Thus, it is important not only to focus on the specifics of relaxation, but also to discuss with students what it means to be relaxed and how students have to give themselves permission to relax.

Third, when relaxation is introduced, it is offered as an active coping skill—one which requires practice (Goldfried, 1977). Teaching and practicing relaxation through the use of reinforcement, modeling, and role playing, for example, is as important as teaching a specific behavioral response. Teachers should underscore the fact that, because relaxation is a skill, students should not expect to see sudden large changes but a gradual improvement in coping ability. It is also important to anticipate setbacks as the acquisition of such coping skills is rarely a steady or smooth process.

Fourth, Meichanbaum (1985) stressed the need to discuss specific ways in which students will use relaxation skills in anticipation of stressful situations, especially when low-intensity cues are evident. It is important not to assume that students will readily generalize procedures across situations. Such generalization needs to be built into the training regimen. To this end, shaping, fading, and corrective feedback can be used to help students become aware of low-intensity cues signaling the need to begin engaging in relaxation during practice to real-life scenarios. This reduces the risk of exposing students to situations so stressful that production of relaxation responses becomes problematic.

Incorporating relaxation exercises into social skills training programs can have a concupiscible effect upon remediating childhood and adolescent emotional and behavioral problems. It is important that students practice muscle relaxation under stress-engendering real-life situations. Within a social skills training format, relaxation exercises are presented as one of many skills necessary to be able to cope effectively in a variety of interpersonal situations. In fact, proficiency in relaxation can facilitate acquisition of such skills as assertiveness or problem-solving.

Conclusion

Palliative coping techniques that relieve emotional distress, such as relaxation, have been conspicuously missing from social skills training programs. This omission is unfortunate as relaxation training has been found to be an effective treatment for a variety of childhood and adolescent behavior problems. In this article, relaxation techniques were suggested as being easy to incorporate into social skills training programs, therefore improving the overall effectiveness of these programs.

Studies were reviewed that demonstrated efficacy of relaxation procedures for a variety of child and adolescent problematic behaviors. Several guidelines were presented for incorporating relaxation into social skills training procedures. The discussion presented in this article suggests that relaxation exercises are effective procedures that should not be omitted from social skills training programs. There is a need, however, to provide students with a rationale for the exercises and provide practice, plan for generalization, and identify students' self-attributions. It is possible for educators to address these issues, thereby extending the application of social skills training to students exhibiting a variety of interpersonal skill deficits.

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